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TREATISES,

DEVOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL:

VIZ.

HEAVEN UPON EARTH;
THE CHRISTIAN; THE DEVOUT SOUL;
SELECT THOUGHTS; MEDITATION ON THE LOVE OF CHRIST;
AND THE SOUL'S FAREWELL TO EARTH:

SELECTED FROM THE WORKS

OF

JOSEPH HALL, D.D.

CHAPLAIN TO KING JAMES I.; BISHOP OF NORWICH, &c.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY AND NOTES,

BY THE

REV. R. CATTERMOLE, B. D.

LONDON:

John Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly;

WHITTAKER & CO. AVE-MARIA LANE; SIMPKIN & MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT; TALBOYS, OXFORD; DEIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE; OLIVER & BOYD, EDINBURGH; AND CUMMING, DUBLIN.

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AND

THE REV. H. STEBBING, M.A.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

WERE it possible to set aside every historical proof of the supernatural origin of Christianity, there would still remain, for the reflecting and philosophic mind, a fund of powerful evidence—of evidence, not perhaps less worthy of being brought forward, in these times, than that of prophecies fulfilled or miracles performed—in the astonishing adaptation of its principles to the needs and faculties of mankind, in every period and under every variety of circumstances; as well as in the demonstrated adequacy of revelation to form the highest and most angelic character which is consistent with our fallen condition, and attainable under the disturbing pressure of those external circumstances in the midst of which we are placed.

That the diffusion of the gospel was not generally followed, in the ages succeeding the apostolical, by juster views of its nature, or more perfect examples of practical conformity with its spirit, tends rather to confirm than to impugn this position; inasmuch as the principle advanced supposes that the seed of faith flourishes, whether

little or much, in exact proportion to the peculiarities of the soil into which it is cast, and according to the succession of times and seasons. In the first centuries, during the period of persecution, and when as yet the gospel was chiefly embraced by the humble and oppressed classes, trained by their social position to patient endurance,—submissive fortitude, constancy, and resignation, were the prevailing forms under which its divine principles were rendered visible and realized in action. With the accession of the learned—the philosophers of the pagan schools—to the Christian church, arose the passion for nice and subtle distinctions, and the notion that dreamy contemplation, and the austere retiredness that promotes it, were necessary to the attainment of that perfection which was to result from the discipline of revealed truth. Hence proceeded, on the one hand, those lamentable divisions, sects, heresies, and obstinate controversies, that so long deformed the church; on the other, the miserable folly which peopled the deserts of Egypt and Asia with those superstitious inhabitants of their solitudes, who, from dread of falling beneath the despotism of an over-indulged nature, wilfully embraced a degrading slavery to the miseries of a nature self-tormented.

While this was going on in the east—while the technical disputes and unprofitable subtleties of Greek theology amused, for centuries, the degene-

rate swarms of an expiring empire—another spirit had begun to modify practical Christianity in the western world. Those hardy tribes who were now providentially brought into the centre of Europe, presenting a national character better qualified for the reception of the faith—a loftier imagination, and a purer moral sense—began soon to exhibit more sound and substantial results of the influence of the gospel upon mankind than had previously appeared, except in a comparatively few instances in the earliest and purest times: they continued, nevertheless, too rude and uncultivated to receive the perfect impression of its divinity. As is ever the case with minds of limited cultivation, they brought down its principles to the level of their own conceptions, feelings, and condition. We meet with an illustration of this, in the works which remain by the artists of the middle ages. The virgin Mary is there not unfrequently delineated in the habits of a nun, the Jewish high-priest appears arrayed like a mitred prelate of the period, while Joseph of Arimathea and the believing centurion are represented as belted knights. In the same manner, the moral character, restored by means of redemption to its original likeness to God, as set before us in the inspired pages of St. John and St. Paul, was modified by a familiar adaptation to the habitual notions and pursuits of the converts. The history of Europe, during many

centuries, offers two grand features or divisions—the clerical and secular; or, to speak more strictly perhaps, the monastic and the knightly. Hence Christianity, so far as it produced any sensible effect upon the lives of men, was displayed in the two corresponding types or forms: that of the secular Christian—too often no more than nominally Christian—bold, haughty, contemptuous, superstitious, but sincere, zealous, and full of honour; and the ecclesiastical or monkish, austere, studious, and devout, but unenlightened, credulous, and neglecting essentials in the observance of forms and ceremonies. This was, no doubt, a most imperfect state of things, as the fruit of Christian principles in social life; it was better, however, than paganism, even under the deceptive lustre cast upon it by a high degree of civilization: it was better in itself; it was immeasurably better, in respect to the hope it held out of the future. That Providence should permit the operation of those causes which practically subjected the divine spirit of revelation to the natural passions and earthward tendencies of mankind, there were, we may be sure, satisfactory reasons. This lazy sabbath of the moral being was to be succeeded by a period of energetic exertion, to which it was doubtless preparatory: this fallow year in God's husbandry was endured, with reference to the ensuing harvests. There is a charm in the annals of those

early times, not unlike that which endears the recollections of our youth, in spite of its weaknesses long since discovered, and its errors now deplored; and the fact, that the Almighty will call every human being to account for his transgressions, and defects of performance, is quite consistent with our believing that those periods which we call the ages of moral darkness may, nevertheless, be complacently regarded by Him whose praise is uttered by the darkness as well as by the light, whose inscrutable wisdom is at work in such cheerless seasons in preparing for a period to follow, when his Spirit will be more genially received, and his will more truly performed.

The Reformation opened such an era. Then, once more men looked earnestly into the Scriptures; that profound mirror of truth, in which, beholding God as revealed in his incarnate Son, we contemplate whatever belongs to the perfection of human nature. With enlarged intelligence came more ardent aspirations and more sustained endeavours after excellence. The principles of the gospel began to be manifestly realized in the lives of multitudes; to be influential, directly or indirectly, upon all. Civil freedom and intellectual improvement, first the *children*, became in turn the *ministers* of divine truth. It was more especially in this favoured land and under the auspices of the national church of England, that those successive steps in the ad-

vancement of social happiness, which may be traced up to Christianity as their originating principle, proved, by a providential reaction, subsidiary to its diffusion and efficacy. Simultaneously with the greatest ornaments of our secular history, arose the constellation (rather than the series) of our unrivalled elder divines; and the pursuit of those sciences and forms of knowledge, which, by spiritualizing, ennoble and bless mankind, was followed by its natural consequences.

For the first hundred years which followed the unrestrained use of the Bible and vernacular Liturgy, and the preaching in every village and hamlet, (not of the logical niceties of the schoolmen, but) of the unadulterated word of God, the national morals went on improving, and the national character continued to be elevated; at the same time, we have also reason to believe, a corresponding increase took place in the number of those individuals, who, in the recesses of private life, expanded their hearts gladly and unreservedly to the beams of gospel light, and in mind, in will, and deportment, made near approaches to the Scripture model. Now it was, that the character of the Christian, in its genuine proportions, began to be truly understood and rightly appreciated. Now did the servant of God, in the midst of an evil world, stand forth in his simple and native grandeur: delivered from the bonds of superstition and slavish ignorance; fervent, with-

out intolerance or fanaticism; contemplative, but not visionary; courteous, meek, gentle, forgiving, yet fearless and persevering; not shunning the tumult of secular affairs, yet unsullied or rather purified by the trial; living, under the constant influence of faith, hope, and charity, a life becoming the friend of God and man; and, by the use of that precious alchymy, which is taught by the holy Spirit, and of which the principles are unfolded in the inspired documents of salvation, converting the polluted air of camps and courts, of commercial strife, and all the Babel resorts of the followers of mammon, into wholesome elements and improving exercises of virtue. Now, in short, appeared, in the writings of the wise as well as in the practice of the holy, that "man after God's own heart," whom it is the design of the treatises placed before the reader in the following pages, at once to display and to recommend for imitation; that character which only the gospel, honestly administered and duly accepted, can form; and which their distinguished author has sketched with fewer touches, but with great beauty, in the subjoined portrait of himself, in his most favoured moods: "What a heaven do I feel in myself," writes the pious bishop, in a letter to a friend, "when, after many traverses of meditation, I find in my heart a feeling possession of my God! when I can walk and converse with the God of heaven, not without an openness of heart

and familiarity; when my soul hath caught fast and sensible hold of my Saviour, and either pulls him down to itself, or rather lifts up itself to him; and can and dare secretly avouch, 'I know whom I have believed;' when I can look upon all this inferior creation with the eyes of a stranger, and am transported to my home in my thoughts, solacing myself in the view and meditation of my future glory, and that presence of the saints; when I see wherefore I was made; and my conscience tells me I have done that for which I came—done it, not so as I can boast, but so as it is accepted; while my weaknesses are pardoned, and my acts measured by my desires, and my desires by their sincerity; lastly, when I can find myself upon holy resolution, made firm and square, fit to entertain all events; the good with moderate regard, the evil with courage and patience, both with thanks; strongly settled to good purposes; constant and cheerful in devotion; and, in a word, ready for God, yea full of God."[1]

The excellent prelate, Joseph Hall, was among those numerous examples on record, of persons memorable for religious and moral worth, who have had reason to ascribe the formation of their characters, under Providence, to the care of maternal piety. His mother, he says, was "a woman of that rare sanctity, that, were it not for my interest in nature, I dare say,

[1] Epistles, Decade ii. Ep. 1.

that neither Aleth, the mother of that just honour of Clairval, nor Monica, nor any other of those pious matrons anciently famous for devotion, need to disdain her admittance to comparison. So had she profited in the school of Christ, that it was hard for any friend to come from her discourse no whit holier. How often have I blessed the memory of those divine passages of experimental divinity which I have heard from her mouth! What day did she pass without a large task of private devotion? Never any lips have read to me such feeling lectures of piety; neither have I known any soul that more accurately practised them than her own. Shortly, for I can hardly take off my pen from so exemplary a subject, her life and death were saint-like." These lessons, by divine goodness, were not lost upon him; for we find him, while yet a youth of fifteen, betaking himself most devoutly to prayer for guidance and protection in the ordering of his future life; and, many years afterwards, when pursuing his successful career at the university, "Never durst I," he writes, "appear in any of those exercises of scholarship till I had from my knees looked up to heaven for a blessing, and renewed my actual dependence upon that divine hand."[1] Would not such a habit of bringing devotion in aid of study, do much towards restoring the science of Theology in England to its ancient dignity and practical importance?

[1] See also page xxxv.

Hall took the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Cambridge in 1592, when about nineteen years of age. He soon afterwards became Fellow of his college (Emanuel;) and, in 1596, was made a Master of Arts. His first preferment was the rectory of Halsted, in Suffolk, in the gift of Sir Robert Drury, the patron also of Donne; shortly after his presentation to which, he married. In 1605, being invited by Sir Edmund Bacon, grandson of the celebrated Lord Bacon, to accompany him on a journey into the Low Countries, he embraced the opportunity with the view of making himself thoroughly acquainted with the actual state of the Roman Catholic church. The principal incident relative to this journey, which he has recorded in the slight sketch left by him of his life, is a somewhat amusing conference with Coster, "a famous Jesuit; an old man, more testy than subtle, and more able to wrangle than satisfy."

In his humble benefice at Halsted, this accomplished divine, already favourably known to the public as an author, would have been content to pass his life, had not his patron, in refusing to give up a trifling annual sum, his lawful due, and indispensable to his support, obliged him to seek a competency elsewhere. Hall had little reason to regret a change thus forced on him; nevertheless, he took leave of Sir Robert and his lady with many affectionate expressions of pastoral feel-

ing. In his farewell letter, he thus writes to them: "With how unwilling a heart I leave you, He knows that searches the heart. You are dear to me as a charge to a pastor: if my pains to you have not proved it, suspect me. Yet I leave you. God calls me to a greater work. I must follow him. It were more easy to me to live secretly hidden in that quiet obscurity, than to be drawn out to the eye of the world. In this point, if I seem to neglect you, blame me not: I must neglect and forget myself. I can but labour, wheresoever I am. God knows how willingly I do that, whether there or here. I shall dig, and delve, and plant, in what ground soever my Master sets me. If he take me to a larger field, complain you not of the loss, while the church may gain." This observation proved happily prophetical.

To the circumstances of his emerging from his retirement in Suffolk, to commence his more public career in the church, a just prominency is assigned by Hall among those recorded events which he calls "specialties of Providence" towards himself. He was in London, endeavouring to obtain from Sir Robert Drury an engagement no longer to withhold any portion of the income of the living at Halsted, when he was recommended to an opportunity of preaching before the interesting and virtuous Henry, Prince of Wales, son to James I. The prince had read and much admired Hall's

"Meditations;" the first eleven books of which were already published; and, being no less pleased with him in the pulpit, immediately appointed him one of his chaplains. He was now presented, by Lord Denny, afterwards Earl of Norwich, with the donative of Waltham Cross, and by Prince Henry to a prebend in the collegiate church of Wolverhampton. An estate belonging to this church, illegally detained from it by Sir Walter Leveson, Hall succeeded in recovering to the establishment, and in restoring the neglected service.

At Waltham he remained more than twenty years, (although frequently solicited by his royal patron to take up his residence at court,) regularly preaching, as he had previously done at Halsted, three sermons in each week. During this long period, however, he was several times taken from home on public employment in his profession. In the year 1616, he accompanied the splendid embassy of Lord Hay to the court of Henry the Fourth of France. In March following he was among the clergymen chosen by King James to attend him into Scotland, when that sovereign revisited his native country, with a design to assimilate the religion of that portion of his dominions to the forms of the Anglican church. His third employment of a public nature was his mission to the great Protestant council, the synod of Dort, with Davenant and other English divines; from this charge, however,

he was compelled by ill health to retire, but not till he had done honour to the church he represented, by his learning and moderation. Although the object of this mission was to support the party opposed to the Arminian doctrines, yet that Hall was not strictly a Calvinist, (to make use of a term about that time first brought into vogue,) that his opinions in regard to the celebrated *five points*,[1] which were discussed in that assembly, were moderated by practical wisdom and benevolence, appears both from his conduct there, and from the course he pursued on his return. He now found the same controversy raging violently in England; in order to the composing of which quarrels, he tells us, he wrote his prospect of pacification, (entitled, "Via Media: the way of Peace in the Five busy Articles," &c.) wherein he endeavoured to point out a safe middle way for moderate Christians between the two extremes. "These," he adds, "I made bold to present to his excellent majesty, together with an humble motion of a peaceable silence to be enjoined to both parts, in those other collateral and needless disquisitions."

Scarcely had Dr. Hall—he had received the degree of B. D. in 1603, and that of D. D. in 1612—completed this well-meant, but, as it proved, unavailing service to the church, when he found himself engaged in a dispute with her more ancient enemies.

[1] Predestination;—the Extent of the Efficacy of Christ's Death;—Freewill;—Conversion;—Perseverance.

Of his share in the Popish controversies of that agitated period, he gives the following account:—"Some insolent Romanists, Jesuits especially, in their bold disputations pressed nothing so much as a catalogue of the professors of our religion to be deduced from the primitive times; and, with the peremptory challenge of the impossibility of this pedigree, dazzled the eyes of the simple; while some of our learned men, undertaking to satisfy so needless and unjust a demand, gave, as I conceived, great advantage to the adversary. In a just indignation to see us thus wronged, by mistaking the question betwixt us; as if we, yielding ourselves of another church, originally and fundamentally different, should make good our own erection upon the ruins, yea, the nullity, of theirs; and, well considering the infinite and great inconveniencies that must needs follow upon this defence, I adventured to set my pen on work; desiring to rectify the opinions of those men, whom an ignorant zeal had transported, to the prejudice of our holy cause: laying forth the corruptions of the Romish Church, yet making our game of the outward visibility thereof; and, by this means, putting them to the probation of those newly obtruded corruptions, which are truly guilty of the breach betwixt us.[1] The drift whereof not being well conceived, by some spirits that were not so wise as fervent, I was suddenly exposed to the rash cen-

[1] In "The Old Religion."

sures of many well affected and zealous Protestants; as if I had, in a remission to my wonted zeal to the truth, attributed too much to the Roman church, and strengthened the adversaries' hands and weakened our own. This envy I was fain to take off by my speedy Apologetical Advertisement, and after that by my 'Reconciler,' seconded with the unanimous letters of such reverend, learned, sound divines, both bishops and doctors, by whose undoubtable authority I was able to bear down calumny itself: which done, I did, by a seasonable moderation, provide for the peace of the church, in silencing both my defendants and challengers, in this unkind and ill-raised quarrel."

Having some years previously ascended the usual intermediate step, by his promotion to the deanery of Worcester, Hall was, in 1624, offered a bishopric. The see proposed was Gloucester: he declined it; but, in 1627, accepted that of Exeter. In those times of well-grounded jealousy on the part of the Church of England, in regard to the designs of the Puritans, the conciliatory demeanour of the new bishop could scarcely fail of bringing him under the charge of blameable indulgence to nonconformists: in this light he was maliciously represented to the King; an accusation which caused him much con-

[1] "The Reconciler, an epistle pacificatory of the seeming differences of opinion, concerning the trueness and visibility of the Roman church."

cern, and placed him in a situation of some danger. Every succeeding year now added proof to the last, that the time was at hand when the sincerity of men's attachment to the ritual and government of the church would be severely put to the test. The ominous aspect which public events bore towards the safety of these institutions, in the year 1640,—a year memorable for the commencement of the Long Parliament, and the first manifest breaking out of those rancorous divisions which in their course overthrew the establishment, and with it the monarchy,—called forth the suspected favourer of the nonconformists as the able champion of episcopal government. His first publication, on this subject,—"Episcopacy by Divine Right asserted,"—was followed, before the close of the year, by a second, a beautiful and earnest address, entitled, "An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament, in defence of the Liturgy and Episcopacy." The high ground taken by Hall in these publications, gave violent offence to the Presbyterian party. It was in reply to the latter work, that the celebrated treatise, called "Smectymnuus," was written; a title which, as is generally known, was formed from the initials of the writers' names, (five in number,) who jointly contributed to its composition.[1] This controversy, which was maintained for some time,

[1] Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, William Spurslowe.

on the bishop's side with learning and temperate vigour, and, as he truly says, on the part of his opponents, "with much fierceness of spirit and asperity of language," was made yet more remarkable by the subsequent accession of the name of Milton to the list of combatants. "Smectymnuus" was followed by Hall's "Defence of his Humble Remonstrance." And now, in a quarrel worthy of his "giant's strength" and "glittering arms," had he fought on the side of truth and antiquity, issued to the combat the poet of "Lost" and "recovered Paradise." Milton's Treatise is characterised less by argument than by what its author expressively describes as "a certain grim laughter;" and is chiefly worthy of being remembered as showing how the highest intellectual endowments may be deprived of their angelic temper, when, by reversing the order of the divine promise,[1] they are employed, not, at the call of universal charity, as instruments to promote the welfare of mankind, but to havoc and destroy in the war of party passions.

When the parliament of 1640 assembled, it was in the midst of a deep, expectant agitation of the national mind, which indistinctly but fearfully presaged the evils that followed. Hall's prophetic foresight of the important results, is thus expressed in the introduction to his "Humble Remonstrance:" "It were but a narrow word, to say that

[1] Isaiah, ii. 4.

the eyes of all us, the good subjects of the whole realm, are fixed upon your success; certainly there are not more eyes in these three interessed kingdoms than are now bent upon you. Yea, all the neighbour churches and kingdoms, if I may not say the whole Christian world, and no small part beyond it, look wishfully upon your faces, and with stretched-out necks gaze at the issue of your great meeting." Whether or not, that assembly opened with a fixed purpose, on the part of the Presbyterian and other sects, to overthrow the constitution in church and state, has ever since been, and is likely to continue to be, a question most unprofitably discussed: that such a design was, at least, soon after tacitly conceived, seems rendered undeniable by the fact, that the measures, which originated with those parties, were pushed on to the production of that fatal issue, with but a more determined spirit, after the entire removal of those grievances which were alleged as their original pretext.

The first attack made by the Commons upon the episcopal order, was in an attempt to fasten an indictment for high treason upon the bishops, and other members of the late convocation, founded on the subscription to a body of canons which had been promulgated by that assembly, for preventing innovation in the doctrine, discipline, and government of the church. Upon the failure of this design, "petitions, accusatory," numerously, but, in

many instances fraudulently, signed, were procured from all parts of the kingdom, and especially from the inferior classes inhabiting the metropolis, against episcopal government. In order to enforce these demands by intimidation, the populace were encouraged to collect in vast numbers at Westminster. The ears of the bishops, in their way to and from the House of Lords, were assailed with the coarsest invectives; and such, at length, was the violence used towards their persons, that attendance upon their senatorial duties was no longer practicable. Thus circumstanced, twelve of their number, of whom Bishop Hall, now (on the decease of Dr. Montagu) translated to the see of Norwich, was one, with Williams, the Archbishop of York, at their head, resolved to petition the King and the Parliament for protection; they, at the same time, adopted the more questionable procedure of protesting against the validity of such laws as should be passed during their forced absence. The advantage which this indiscreet step gave to their enemies, the latter were not the men to neglect; the twelve prelates were instantly called to the bar of the House, on their knees, and committed on a second charge of high treason. This memorable protest was presented December 30th, 1641; and on the 13th of January, Hall and ten of his brethren were lodged in the Tower, where they continued in confinement till the following June. In the interval, they petitioned to the Lords to be heard on their trial, and

were accordingly brought up; but the Parliament finding nothing could be made of such an impeachment, found a pretence for remanding them to a future day: that day, however, never came. They had been conveyed by water to avoid the mob; and Hall, in his relation of these circumstances, feelingly alludes to the inconvenience and danger to which these venerable fathers—learned, irreproachable, and gray-headed men,—were exposed on their return, in the darkness of night.

Of the state of religion and public manners, and of the temper with which the imprisoned bishops submitted to restraint, and what use they made of it, we may form some conception from the following passage in Hall's tract, the "Free Prisoner," which was composed in the Tower. "Is it a small benefit," he asks, "that I am placed there, where no oaths, no blasphemies beat my ears? where my eyes are in no peril of wounding objects; where I hear no invectives, no false doctrines, no sermocinations of ironmongers, felt-makers, coblers, broommen, grooms, or any other of those inspired ignorants; no curses, no ribaldries; where I see no drunken comessations, no rebellious routs, no violent oppressions, no obscene rejoicings! This strong Tower serves not so much for our prison as for our defence, what horror soever the name may carry in it. I bless God for these walls; out of which I know not where we could, for the time, have been safe from the rage of the mis-incensed

multitude. Here we have well and happily approved, with the blessed apostle, that, whatever our restraint be, 'the word of God is not bound.' With what liberty, with what zeal, with what success, hath that been preached by us to all comers! Let them say, whether the Tower had ever so many, such guests, or such benedictions; so as, if the place have rendered us safe, we have endeavoured to make it happy. Our troubles, through God's mercy, made us more active, and our labours more effectual."

Upon Bishop Hall's release, which he now obtained, on giving bail to the amount of 5,000*l.*, he retired to Norwich, where he at first met with a better reception from the people than in those evil times was to be expected. But this lasted not long. In April 1643, he was included by name in the order for sequestering the estates of notorious *delinquents;* the term then fashionable in Parliament for all those whom the leaders of that assembly regarded as inimical to their arbitrary acts. His rents were stopped, and his whole property, real and personal, seized; the inventory and appraisement being made with such strictness, that there was not left to him, he says, so much "as a dozen of trenchers, or his children's pictures." Not only his present rents, but even the arrears due to him, being treacherously confessed to the sequestrators, were by them called for and taken from

him. By the act for depriving the bishops of their revenues, it was provided that a yearly allowance for maintenance should be assigned to each, "according to a proportion by them" (the framers of it) "set down;" wherein, writes Hall, "they were pleased that my share should come to 400*l.* per annum." As no steps were taken for his support, he now applied for this allowance; and his claim was readily acceded to by the local committee, but immediately prohibited by the general committee appointed by the Parliament, who refused to grant any thing at all to the bishop; but intimated, that on the application of his wife, a fifth part of his income would be allowed for the support of herself and family. This grant, however, was never realized. The concluding paragraphs of the simple and evidently guileless narrative, from which most of the foregoing particulars have been extracted, are so curiously characteristic of the period, that though familiar to those who have studied the ecclesiastical history of the seventeenth century, they are here given without deviation from the language of the writer.

"Many insolencies and affronts," continues the bishop, "were in all this time put upon me. One while a whole rabble of volunteers came to my gates late, when they were locked up, and called for the porter to give them entrance; which, being not yielded, they threatened to make by force;

and, had not the said gates been very strong, they had done it. Others of them clambered over the walls, and would have entered into my house: their errand, they said, was to search for delinquents; what they would have done I know not, had not we, by a secret way, sent to raise the officers for our rescue. Another while, the sheriff Toftes and alderman Linsey, attended with many zealous followers, came into my chapel to look for superstitious pictures and relics of idolatry; and sent for me, to let me know they found those windows full of images which were very offensive, and must be demolished. I told them they were the pictures of some ancient and worthy bishops, as St. Ambrose, Austin, &c. It was answered me, that they were so many popes, and one man amongst the rest would take upon him to defend that every diocesan bishop was pope." In the end, he says, "I obtained leave that I might, with the least loss and defacing of the windows, give order for taking off that offence; which I did, by causing the heads of those pictures to be taken off.

"There was not that care and moderation used in reforming the cathedral church bordering upon my palace. It is no other than tragical to relate the carriage of that furious sacrilege, whereof our eyes and ears were the sad witnesses. What work was here! What beating down of walls,—what tearing up of monuments,—what pulling

down of seats,—what wresting out of irons and brass from the windows and graves,—what defacing of arms,—what demolishing of curious stone-work, that had not any representation in the world, but only of the cost of the founder and skill of the mason,—what tooting and piping upon the destroyed organ-pipes! and what a hideous triumph on the market-day before all the country; when, in a kind of sacrilegious and profane procession, all the organ-pipes, vestments, with copes and surplices, together with the leaden cross which had been newly sawn down from above the green-yard pulpit, and the service-books and singing-books that could be had, were carried to the fire in the public market-place; a lewd wretch walking before the train, in his cope trailing in the dirt, with a service-book in his hand, imitating in an impious scorn the tune, and usurping the words of the litany used formerly in the church. Near the public cross all these monuments of idolatry must be sacrificed to the fire; not without much ostentation of a zealous joy, in discharging ordnance, to the cost of some who professed how much they had longed to see that day. Neither was it any news upon this guild-day, to have the cathedral, now open on all sides, to be filled with musketeers waiting for the major's return, drinking and tobacconing us freely, as if it had turned ale-house.

"Still yet I remained in my palace, though with

but a poor retinue and means; but the house was held too good for me. Many messages were sent by Mr. Corbet to remove me thence. The first pretence was, that the committee, who now was at charge for a house to sit in, might make their daily session there; being a place both more public, roomy, and chargeless. The committee, after many consultations, resolved it convenient to remove thither, though many overtures and offers were made to the contrary. Mr. Corbet was impatient of my stay there; and procures and sends peremptory messages for my present dislodging. We desired to have some time allowed for providing some other mansion, if we must needs be thrust out of this; which my wife was so willing to hold, that she offered, if the charge of the present committee-house were the thing stood upon, she would be content to defray the sum of the rent of that house of her fifth part; but that might not be yielded; out we must, and that in three weeks' warning, by Midsummer-day then approaching; so as we might have lain in the street, for aught I know, had not the providence of God so ordered it, that a neighbour in the Close, one Mr. Gostlin, a widower, was content to void his house for us.

"This hath been my measure."—

This autobiographical sketch bears the date of May 29, 1647. Shortly afterwards, the deprived bishop secured a retreat from the storms that agitated

his declining life, (he had now reached more than the average allotment of a good old age,) which, if less honourable than it became his country to afford such a man in the close of a long life of public usefulness, during which he had presented the world with many precious volumes, such as "it will not willingly let die;" yet afforded him the quiet which his years required, with leisure not only to practise that art of preparing for another state of existence, "wherein," says he, "after long profession of other sciences, I am still (why should I shame to confess?) a learner, and shall be, I hope, whilst I live;" but also, by his example, and by the further exercise of his indefatigable pen, to teach the same to others. The place to which he retired was the village of Higham, near Norwich, where he rented a small estate. He died at Higham, September 8, 1656, at the advanced age of 82, and was buried in the church-yard of that place, conformably to an opinion held by him, in common with some other pious and excellent persons, as thus expressed in his will: "I do not hold God's house a meet repository for the dead bodies of the greatest saints."

Bishop Hall may be fearlessly named among the best and holiest persons that any age or country has produced. Ever earnest in exercising his charity to mankind by labouring for the spiritual

benefit of his own and future generations,—his love to God in a zealous discharge of the duties of his high calling, and a fervent communion with the Spirit of light and truth; he, in his own person, realized that character which it was the design of his numerous works to form—A THOROUGH CHRISTIAN. That this harmony should exist between his life and the effusions of his pen is natural; for no one can become acquainted with the latter without perceiving that they contain the faithful results of his own experience, and the genuine impress of his convictions. His habits inclined to be ascetic; yet this was not from sourness of disposition; but partly because such was with good men the fashion of the times in which he lived, and partly that such habits were congenial with his apostolic simplicity of mind, confirmed by much retired study. If he despised the world,—and, speaking of himself, he says, "It were too great a shame for a philosopher, a Christian, a divine, a bishop, to have his thoughts grovelling here upon earth; for mine, they scorn the employment, and look upon all these sublunary distractions with no other eyes than contempt,"—this was neither the consequence of ignorance of society, nor of an unwilling seclusion from its pleasures; for we possess abundant proofs that he was a keen and various observer; while the amusements and pursuits of the court were open to him, and inviting his regard throughout the whole of that portion of his life, during which they are com-

monly found to be most attractive. If, again, he was devoutly earnest in his preparation for a higher sphere of existence hereafter, it was not because his eye was insensible to the natural charms which earth presents to her intelligent inhabitants, or his heart incapable of human attachment—he was a poet,[1] a friend, a husband, and a father; but, because his earnest faith admitted him to clear views of the preciousness of that existence, and because the familiar experience he enjoyed of the daily-growing immortality within him endeared to his soul the anticipation of its full development. The reader will not fail to be pleased, if not improved, by the following account of Bishop Hall's daily habits, given by himself, as they appear to have existed through the greater part of his long life.

"First, I desire to awake at those hours, not when I will but when I must: pleasure is not a fit rule for rest, but health; neither do I consult so much with the sun, as mine own necessity, whether of body or, in that, of the mind. If this vessel could well serve me waking, it should never sleep; but now, it must be pleased that it may be serviceable.

"Now, when sleep is rather driven away than leaves me, I would ever awake with God. My first thoughts are for him who hath made the night for rest, and the day for travail; and, as he gives,

[1] His claim to this title rests on his "Virgidemierum," a series of satires published in 1597, and on a metrical version of some of the Psalms.

so blesses both. If my heart be early seasoned with his presence, it will savour of him all day after.

"While my body is dressing, not with an effeminate curiosity, nor yet with rude neglect, my mind addresses itself to her ensuing task; bethinking what is to done, and in what order, and marshalling as it may be my hours with my work.

"That done, after some while meditation, I walk up to my masters and companions, my books; and sitting down amongst them with the best contentment, I dare not reach forth my hand to salute any of them till I have first looked up to heaven, and craved favour of him to whom all my studies are duly referred, without whom I can neither profit nor labour. After this, out of no over-great variety, I call forth those which may best fit my occasions, wherein I am not too scrupulous of age; sometimes I put myself to school to one of those ancients whom the church hath honoured with the name of fathers, whose volumes I confess not to open without a secret reverence of their holiness and gravity; sometimes to those latter doctors, which want nothing but age to make them classical; always to God's book. That day is lost whereof some hours are not improved in those divine monuments; others I turn over out of choice, these out of duty.

"Ere I can have sat unto weariness, my family, having now overcome all household distractions,

invites me to our common devotions; not without some short preparation. "These, heartily performed, send me up with a more strong and cheerful appetite to my former work, which I find made easy to me by intermission and variety.

"Now therefore can I deceive the hours with change of pleasures, that is, of labours. One while mine eyes are busied, another while my hand, and sometimes my mind takes the burden from them both. One hour is spent in textual divinity, another in controversy; histories relieve them both. Now, when the mind is weary of other labours, it begins to undertake her own: sometimes it meditates and winds up for future use; sometimes it lays forth her conceits into present discourse; sometimes for itself, ofter for others. Neither know I whether it works or plays in these thoughts: I am sure no sport hath more pleasure, no work more use; only the decay of a weak body makes me think these delights insensibly laborious.

"Thus could I all day, as ringers use, make myself music with changes, and complain sooner of the day for shortness, than of the business for toil, were it not that this faint monitor interrupts me still in the midst of my busy pleasures, and enforces me both to respite and repast. I must yield to both; while my body and mind are joined together in these unequal couples, the better must follow the weaker.

"Before my meals, therefore, and after, I let myself loose from all thoughts, and now would forget that I ever studied. A full mind takes away the body's appetite, no less than a full body makes a dull and unwieldly mind. Company, discourse, recreations, are now seasonable and welcome. These prepare me for a diet, not gluttonous but medicinal; the palate may not be pleased, but the stomach, nor that for its own sake. Neither would I think any of these comforts worth respect in themselves, but in their use, in their end, so far as they may enable me to better things. If I see any dish to tempt my palate, I fear a serpent in that apple, and would please myself in a wilful denial. I rise capable of more, not desirous; not now immediately from my trencher to my book, but after some intermission. Moderate speed is a sure help to all proceedings; whereas those things which are prosecuted with violence of endeavour or desire, either succeed not or continue not. After my latter meal my thoughts are slight; only my memory may be charged with her task of recalling what was committed to her custody in the day, and my heart is busy in examining my hands and mouth, and all other senses, of that day's behaviour.

"And, now the evening is come, no tradesman doth more carefully take in his wares, clear his shop-board, and shut his windows, than I would

shut up my thoughts and clear my mind. That student shall live miserably, which, like a camel, lies down under his burden. All this done, calling together my family, we end the day with God. Thus do we rather drive away the time before us, than follow it.

"Such are my common days. But God's day calls for another respect. The same sun arises on this day, and enlightens it; yet, because that Sun of Righteousness arose upon it, and gave a new life unto the world in it, and drew the strength of God's moral precept unto it, therefore justly do we sing with the Psalmist, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' Now, I forget the world, and, in a sort, myself; and deal with my wonted thoughts as great men use, who, at some times of their privacy, forbid the access of all suitors. Prayer, meditation, reading, hearing, preaching, singing, good conference, are the businesses of this day; which I dare not bestow on any work or pleasure but heavenly. I hate superstition on the one side, and looseness on the other; but I find it hard to offend in too much devotion, easy in profaneness. The whole week is sanctified by this day; and, according to my care of this, is my blessing on the rest.

"I show you what I would do, and what I ought; I commit my desires to the imitation of the weak, my actions to the censures of the wise and holy, my weaknesses to the pardon and redress of my merciful God."

To a man so occupied, the loss of wealth, power, and public influence, must have been a consideration but little affecting his real happiness. He has left, indeed, a record of his sufferings, written and entitled in the temper of one who felt that he had reason to complain. Yet we shall do him no more than justice, if we refer any severe expression it may contain rather to his sense of insulted dignity as a bishop, than to his injuries as a man: he was too good a citizen, and too sound a churchman, not to lament, amid the howlings of the political tempest, far less for his personal share of the prosperity it had swept away, than for the overthrow of the temple and the desolation of Jerusalem. In the very depth of the national miseries, however, he did not despair; in faith and confident waiting upon Providence, he beheld afar, through the surrounding gloom, the dawn of a brighter day;[1] and he thought the only way in which those in his circumstances could hasten that happy period, was by promoting works of charity and peace, and that it was their duty in other respects to "stand still and see the salvation of God." Respecting his endeavours, at all times, to promote peace, he thus speaks: "It was ever the desire of my soul, even from my first entrance upon the public service of the church, (according to my known signature,) with Noah's dove, to have brought an olive-branch to the tossed

[1] See his "Revelation Unrevealed."

ark; and God knows how sincerely I have endeavoured it. Doubtless our main errand to the world is peace; and woe be to us if we do it not." To the discharge of this paramount duty of a Christian minister were especially devoted those numerous treatises—some of them among the most valuable of his writings—which were composed by him in the interval between his retirement to his cottage at Higham, and his death. Amid the uproar of contending factions, by turns usurping the pulpit and monopolizing the press, the "still voice" of reason and religious contemplation, which issued from that obscure seclusion, continued to "find fit audience." That publications breathing so pure and tranquil a spirit, were received by so many with a fervent welcome, was a pledge that the heart of the distracted nation was yet sound. It proved that there was yet a remnant left in the land—the "elect, for whose sake the evil days should be shortened"—who loved mankind and feared God; men distinguished alike from the crazy fanatic, the profligate among the royalists, and the selfish hypocrites whom present interest attached equally to any side, or to all by turns. It is to such that, in times of public commotion and disorder, nations owe their deliverance; and, whatever may have been the case in periods of convulsion in countries less happily constituted than our own, in England we need never despair that the proportion of "righ-

teous men" required to conciliate heaven for the common salvation, will be found. To be able to form the wish for such, is, as far as for this end is required, to be of the number.

The writings of Bishop Hall have maintained, nearly down to our own times, (perhaps it may be said, they still retain,) a more extensive popularity than those of almost any other of the great divines of an age abounding in examples of consummate theological learning and ability. We have no difficulty in accounting for this. Though replete with erudition, these works are familiar in style; and while they possess much of the warmth and interest which belong to the produce of individual thought, they likewise present the truth and the reality, which only the acute observer of mankind can impart to his delineations. It is also to be in part attributed to another quality of his style, besides that which we have termed its familiarity. Notwithstanding his occasional use of terms now obsolete, this author has more of a modern air than any of his contemporaries. This is chiefly owing to the brevity of his periods. That broad and massive structure of sentences, which is not more characteristic of our writers of the highest genius, from the Reformation to the Revolution, than it is true to the nature of our language, and in harmony with the massive vigour of genuine English mind, Hall was among the first to discard; and to intro-

duce instead the modern laconic period, by breaking up his diction into fragments of more attractive brilliancy, and greater convenience for ordinary capacities. Upon the whole, we cannot better sum up the general claims of this admirable *Sacred Classic* to the reader's esteem, than by adopting the description given of him by his contemporary, Fuller, that he was "our English Seneca, dexterous at controversy, not unhappy at comments, very good at characters, better in sermons, best of all in meditations and contemplations." It is in the last, and, according to this testimony, his best character as an author, that Bishop Hall is introduced to the reader in the present volume.

It yet remains the duty of the editor to add a few words, in regard to the following selection. In giving the preference, on this occasion, to the minor pieces of this admired writer, he had several reasons for his choice. The first and most obvious was their convenient length; a second was the greater novelty of most of these pieces for the general reader, the greater individual importance of the author's more elaborate treatises having diverted attention from his shorter "tractates," as he calls them; and these again were confirmed by the equal but more varied excellence of the latter, rendering them, when methodically arranged, even more likely to prove lastingly profitable. For the contents of the

volume have neither been thrown together at random, nor are they placed in what, but for higher considerations, would have been a very appropriate order, viz. that of the dates of their original publication. It is believed they will be found to accord with the natural succession of the sentiments and needs of the Christian, in such a manner that he may, at every step in their perusal, derive that assistance from them which he will require in the corresponding period of his course; while the whole together may be regarded as a manual of practical theology.

Thus, in "Heaven on Earth" will be found set forth, with great power and brevity, the importance and the method of a religious life. In the "Christian," the principles before adduced are fully exemplified in a characteristic pattern for imitation. We now rise by natural degrees to contemplate and pursue those pious thoughts and reflections, which accompany the Christian mind in its maturer growth; and these are supplied in the third tract, "The Devout Soul." The "Select Thoughts" lays open a wider sphere for the believer's walk and converse with God, in the midst of his duties in the world. Proceeding now to compositions of a loftier devotional character, we are taught to utter the praises of the Redeemer in the "Meditation on the Love of Christ," which we may regard as a sacred Hymn, celebrating the redemption. Lastly,

the whole series is appropriately closed with some pathetic effusions of piety and love to God, suggested by the prospect of death and the assured hope of immortality, in "The Soul's Farewell to Earth."

The numerous works of Bishop Hall appeared singly, at intervals, during a period of almost sixty years. The greater part of them were collected into three volumes folio, and published in his life-time, viz. Vol. I. in 1617, and again in 1624; Vol. II. in 1633; Vol. III. in 1634; a fourth volume, in 4to., entitled, "The Shaking of the Olive Tree," was added after the author's death, in 1660, and a fifth, containing "Divers Treatises," in folio, in 1662. The only modern edition was published in 1808, by the Rev. Josiah Pratt, B. D., in ten vols. 8vo. From this edition the present editor has, in great part, adopted the divisions into paragraphs, and occasionally some improvements upon the old copies in the arrangement of the sections; but the volume now before the reader has not been given to the public without a careful collation of all the known editions of the treatises it contains, and the use of the editor's best judgment in every department of his duty.

R. C.

London, April 14th, 1834.

TREATISES,

DEVOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL.

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HEAVEN UPON EARTH;

OR,

OF TRUE PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY OF MIND.

1627.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY EARL OF HUNTINGDON,

LORD HASTINGS, HUNGERFORD, BOTREAUX, MOLINES, AND MOILES, HIS MAJESTY'S LIEUTENANT IN THE COUNTIES OF LEICESTER AND RUTLAND, MY SINGULAR GOOD LORD:

ALL INCREASE OF TRUE HONOUR, AND HEAVEN BEGUN UPON EARTH.

Right Honourable,

I have undertaken a great task—to teach men how to be happy in this life. I have undertaken, and performed it. Wherein I have followed Seneca; and gone beyond him: followed him, as a philosopher; gone beyond him, as a Christian, as a divine: finding it a true censure of the best moralists, that they were like to goodly ships, graced with great titles, the Safeguard, the Triumph, the Goodspeed, and such like; when yet they have been both extremely sea-beaten, and at last wrecked. The volume is little; perhaps the use, more. I have ever thought, according to the Greek proverb, *μέγα βιβλίον μέγα κακόν.** What it is, even justice challengeth it to him, to whom the author hath devoted himself. The children of the bondman are the goods of the parent's master. I humbly betake it to your Honour's protection, and your Honour to the protection of the Highest.

Your Honour's most humbly devoted,
in all duty and service,

JOSEPH HALL.

* A great book is a great evil.

HEAVEN UPON EARTH.

SECTION I.

Censure of Philosophers.

When I had studiously read over the moral writings of some wise heathen, especially those of the Stoical profession, I must confess, I found a little envy and pity striving together within me. I envied nature in them, to see her so witty in devising such plausible refuges for doubting and troubled minds: I pitied them, to see that their careful disquisition of true rest led them, in the end, but to mere unquietness. Wherein, methought, they were as hounds swift of foot, but not exquisite in scent; which, in a hasty pursuit, take a wrong way; spending their mouths and courses in vain. Their praise of guessing wittily they shall not lose: their hopes, both they lost and whosoever follows them.

If Seneca could have had grace to his wit, what wonders would he have done in this kind! What divine might not have yielded him the chair, for precepts of tranquillity, without any disparagement? As he was, this he hath gained—never

any heathen wrote more divinely; never any philosopher more probably.

Neither would I ever desire better master, if, to this purpose, I needed no other mistress than nature. But this, in truth, is a task which nature hath never, without presumption, undertaken; and never performed, without much imperfection: like to those vain and wandering empirics, which, in tables and pictures, make great ostentation of cures; never approving their skill to their credulous patients. And if she could have truly effected it alone, I know not what employment in this life she should have left for grace to busy herself about, nor what privilege it should have been here below to be a Christian: since this, that we seek, is the noblest work of the soul; and in which alone consists the only heaven of this world: this is the sum of all human desires; which when we have attained, then only we begin to live, and are sure we cannot thenceforth live miserably. No marvel then, if all the heathen have diligently sought after it, many wrote of it, none attained it. Not Athens must teach this lesson, but Jerusalem.

SECTION II.

What Tranquillity is, and wherein it consists.

YET something grace scorneth not to learn of nature; as Moses may take good counsel of a Midianite.

Nature hath ever had more skill in the end, than in the way to it; and, whether she have discoursed of the good estate of the mind, which we call tran-

quility, or the best, which is happiness, hath more happily guessed at the general definition of them, than of the means to compass them.

She teacheth us therefore, without controlment, that the tranquillity of the mind is, as of the sea and weather, when no wind stirreth, when the waves do not tumultuously rise and fall upon each other; but when the face, both of the heaven and waters, is still, fair, and equable: that it is such an even disposition of the heart, wherein the scales of the mind neither rise up towards the beam, through their own lightness, or the overweening opinion of prosperity, nor are too much depressed with any load of sorrow; but hanging equal and unmoved betwixt both, give a man liberty in all occurrences to enjoy himself.

Not that the most temperate mind can be so the master of his passions, as not sometimes to over-joy his grief, or over-grieve his joy, according to the contrary occasions of both: for not the evenest weights, but at their first putting into the balance somewhat sway both parts thereof, not without some show of inequality; which yet, after some little motion, settle themselves in a meet poise. It is enough, that, after some sudden agitation, it can return to itself; and rest itself, at last, in a resolved peace.

And this due composedness of mind we require unto our tranquillity, not for some short fits of good mood, which soon after end in discontentment, but with the condition of perpetuity. for there is no heart makes so rough weather, as not sometimes to admit of a calm; and, whether for that he knoweth no present cause of his trouble, or for that he knoweth that cause of trouble is countervailed

with as great an occasion of private joy, or for that the multitude of evils hath bred carelessness, the man that is most disordered finds some respites of quietness. The balances that are most ill matched in their unsteady motions, come to an equality, but stay not at it. The frantic man cannot avoid the imputation of madness, though he be sober for many moons, if he rage in one.

So then, the calm mind must be settled in an habitual rest: not then firm, when there is nothing to shake it; but then least shaken when it is most assailed.

SECTION III.

Insufficiency of human precepts.—Seneca's rules of Tranquillity abridged.—Rejected as insufficient.—Disposition of the work.

Whence easily appears, how vainly it hath been sought, either in such a constant estate of outward things, as should give no distaste to the mind, while all earthly things vary with the weather, and have no stay but in uncertainty; or in the natural temper of the soul, so ordered by human wisdom as that it should not be affected with any casual events to either part: since that cannot ever, by natural power, be held like to itself; but one while is cheerful, stirring, and ready to undertake; another while, drowsy, dull, comfortless, prone to rest, weary of itself, loathing his own purposes, his own resolutions.

In both which, since the wisest philosophers have grounded all the rules of their tranquillity, it is

plain that they saw it afar off, as they did heaven itself, with a desire and admiration, but knew not the way to it: whereupon, alas! how slight and impotent are the remedies they prescribe for unquietness! For what is it that, for the inconstancy and laziness of the mind, still displeasing itself in what it doth, and for that distemper thereof which ariseth from the fearful, unthriving, and restless desires of it, we should ever be employing ourselves in some public affairs, choosing our business according to our inclination, and prosecuting what we have chosen? wherewith being at last cloyed, we should retire ourselves, and wear the rest of our time in private studies? that we should make due comparative trials of our own ability, nature of our businesses, disposition of our chosen friends? that, in respect of patrimony, we should be but carelessly affected; so drawing it in, as it may be least for show, most for use; removing all pomp, bridling our hopes, cutting off superfluities? for crosses, to consider, that custom will abate and mitigate them; that the best things are but chains and burdens to those that have them, to those that use them; that the worst things have some mixture of comfort, to those that groan under them? Or, leaving these lower rudiments that are given to weak and simple novices, to examine those golden rules of morality, which are commended to the most wise and able practitioners; what it is, to account himself as a tenant at will; to foreimagine the worst, in all casual matters; to avoid all idle and impertinent businesses, all pragmatical meddling with affairs of state; not so to fix ourselves upon any one estate, as to be impatient of a change; to call back the mind from outward things,

and draw it home into itself; to laugh at and esteem lightly of others' misdemeanors; not to depend upon others' opinions, but to stand on our own bottoms; to carry ourselves in an honest and simple truth, free from a curious hypocrisy and affectation of seeming other than we are, and yet as free from a base kind of carelessness; to intermeddle retiredness with society, so as one may give sweetness to the other, and both to us, so slackening the mind that we may not loosen it, and so bending as we may not break it; to make the most of ourselves, cheering up our spirits with variety of recreations, with satiety of meals, and all other bodily indulgence, saving that drunkenness, methinks, can neither beseem a wise philosopher to prescribe, nor a virtuous man to practise? All these, in their kinds, please well, profit much, and are as sovereign for both these, as they are unable to effect that, for which they are propounded.

Nature teacheth thee all these should be done; she cannot teach thee to do them: and yet do all these and no more, let me never have rest if thou have it. For neither are here the greatest enemies of our peace so much as descried afar off; nor those that are noted, are hereby so prevented that upon most diligent practice we can promise ourselves any security: wherewith whoso instructed, dare confidently give challenge to all sinister events, is like to some skilful fencer, who stands upon his usual wards, and plays well; but if there come a strange fetch of an unwonted blow, is put beside the rules of his art, and with much shame overtaken. And for those that are known, believe me, the mind of man is too weak to bear out itself hereby, against all onsets. There are light crosses,

that will take an easy repulse; others yet stronger, that shake the house-side, but break not in upon us; others vehement, which by force make way to the heart; where they find none, breaking open the door of the soul that denies entrance: others violent, that lift the mind off the hinges, or rend the bars of it in pieces; others furious, that tear up the very foundations from the bottom, leaving no monument behind them, but ruin. The wisest and most resolute moralist that ever was,[1] looked pale when he should taste of his hemlock; and, by his timorousness, made sport to those that envied his speculations. The best of the heathen emperors,[2] that was honoured with the title of piety, justly magnified that courage of Christians which made them insult over their tormentors; and, by their fearlessness of earthquakes and deaths, argued the truth of their religion. It must be, it can be, none but a divine power that can uphold the mind against the rage of many afflictions; and yet, the greatest crosses are not the greatest enemies to inward peace. Let us, therefore, look up above ourselves; and, from the rules of a higher art, supply the defects of natural wisdom: giving such infallible directions for tranquillity, that whosoever shall follow cannot but live sweetly with continual delight; applauding himself at home, when all the world beside him shall be miserable.

To which purpose, it shall be requisite, first, to remove all causes of unquietness; and then, to set down the grounds of our happy rest.

[1] Socrates.

[2] Antoninus Pius, in an epistle to the Asians concerning the persecuted Christians.

SECTION IV.

Enemies of inward Peace divided into their ranks.—The torment of an Evil Conscience.—The joy and peace of the Guilty but dissembled.

I FIND, on the one hand, two universal enemies of tranquillity—conscience of evil done, sense or fear of evil suffered. The former, in one word, we call sins; the latter, crosses: the first of these must be quite taken away, the second duly tempered, ere the heart can be at rest. For, first, how can that man be at peace that is at variance with God and himself? How should peace be God's gift, if it could be without him, if it could be against him? It is the profession of sin, although fair spoken at the first closing, to be a perpetual make-bait betwixt God and man, betwixt a man and himself.

And this enmity, though it do not continually show itself, (as the mortalest enemies are not always in pitched fields one against the other; for that the conscience is not ever clamorous, but somewhile is silent, otherwhile with still murmurings bewrays his mislikes;) yet doth evermore work secret unquietness to the heart. The guilty man may have a seeming truce; a true peace he cannot have. Look upon the face of the guilty heart, and thou shalt see it pale and ghastly; the smiles and laughters, faint and heartless; the speeches, doubtful and full of abrupt stops and unseasonable turnings; the purposes and motions unsteady and savouring of much distraction, arguing plainly that sin is not

so smooth at her first motions, as turbulent afterwards: hence are those vain wearyings of places and companies, together with ourselves; that the galled soul doth, after the wont of sick patients, seek refreshing in variety, and, after many tossed and turned sides, complains of remediless and unabated torment. Nero, after so much innocent blood, may change his bed-chamber; but his fiends ever attend him, ever are within him, and are as parts of himself. Alas! what avails it, to seek outward reliefs, when thou hast thine executioner within thee? If thou couldst shift from thyself, thou mightest have some hope of ease: now, thou shalt never want furies, so long as thou hast thyself. Yea, what if thou wouldst run from thyself? Thy soul may fly from thy body; thy conscience will not fly from thy soul, nor thy sin from thy conscience. Some men, indeed, in the bitterness of these pangs of sin, like unto those fondly impatient fishes that leap out of the pan into the flame, have leaped out of this private hell, that is in themselves, into the common pit; choosing to adventure upon the future pains that they have feared, rather than to endure the present horrors they have felt: wherein what have they gained, but to that hell which was within them, a second hell without? The conscience leaves not, where the fiends begin; but both join together in torture.

But there are some firm and obdurate foreheads,[1] whose resolution can laugh their sins out of countenance. There are so large and able gorges, as that they can swallow and digest bloody murders,

[1] A proverbial Latin idiom: a person lost to shame is said to be duræ et perfricatæ frontis.—Ed.

without complaint; who, with the same hands which they have since their last meal embrued in blood, can freely carve to themselves large morsels at the next sitting. Believest thou that such a man's heart laughs with his face? Will not he dare to be a hypocrite, that durst be a villain? These glow-worms, when a night of sorrow encompasses them, make a lightsome and fiery show of joy; when, if thou press them, thou findest nothing but a cold and crude moisture. Knowest thou not, that there are those which count it no shame to sin, yet count it a shame to be checked with remorse, especially so as others' eyes may descry; to whom repentance seems base-mindedness, unworthy of him that professes wisdom and valour? Such a man can grieve, when none sees it; but himself can laugh, when others see it, himself feels not. Assure thyself, that man's heart bleedeth when his face counterfeits a smile: he wears out many waking hours, when thou thinkest he resteth; yea, as his thoughts afford him not sleep, so his very sleep affords him not rest; but, while his senses are tied up his sin is loose; representing itself to him in the ugliest shape, and frightening him with horrible and hellish dreams. And if, perhaps, custom hath bred a carelessness in him, as we see that usual whipping makes the child not care for the rod; yet an unwonted extremity of the blow shall fetch blood of the soul; and make the back that is most hardened, sensible of smart; and the further the blow is fetched, through intermission of remorse, the harder it must needs alight. Therefore, I may confidently tell the careless sinner, as that bold tragedian said to his great Pompey: "The time shall come, wherein thou shalt fetch

deep sighs; and therefore shalt sorrow desperately, because thou sorrowedst not sooner." The fire of the conscience may lie, for a time, smothered with a pile of green wood, that it cannot be discerned; whose moisture when once it hath mastered, it sends up so much greater flame, by how much it had greater resistance. Hope not then, to stop the mouth of thy conscience from exclaiming, while thy sin continues: that endeavour is both vain and hurtful. So I have seen them, that have stopped the nostril for bleeding, in hope to stay the issue; when the blood, hindered in his former course, hath broken out of the mouth, or found way down into the stomach. The conscience is not pacifiable, while sin is within to vex it; no more than an angry swelling can cease throbbing and aching, while the thorn or the corrupted matter lies rotting underneath. Time, that remedies all other evils of the mind, increaseth this; which, like to bodily diseases, proves worse with continuance, and grows upon us with our age.

SECTION V.

The Remedy of an unquiet Conscience.

There can be, therefore, no peace, without reconciliation: thou canst not be friends with thyself, till with God; for thy conscience, which is thy best friend while thou sinnest not, like an honest servant, takes his master's part against thee when thou hast sinned; and will not look straight upon thee, till thou upon God; not daring to be so kind to thee, as to be unfaithful to his Maker.

There can be no reconciliation without remis-

sion. God can neither forget the injury of sin, nor dissemble hatred. It is for men and those of hollow hearts, to make pretences contrary to their affections; soothings, and smiles, and embracements, where we mean not love, are from weakness; either for that we fear our insufficiency of present revenge, or hope for a fitter opportunity afterwards; or for that we desire to make our further advantage of him to whom we mean evil. These courses are not incident into an almighty Power; who, having the command of all vengeance, can smite where he list, without all doubtings or delays.

There can be no remission without satisfaction. Neither dealeth God with us as we men with some desperate debtors; whom, after long dilations of payments and many days broken, we altogether let go for disability, or at least dismiss them upon an easy composition. All sins are debts: all God's debts must be discharged. It is a bold word, but a true, God would not be just if any of his debts should pass unsatisfied. The conceit of the profane vulgar makes him a God all of mercies; and, thereupon, hopes for pardon, without payment. Fond and ignorant presumption, to disjoin mercy and justice in him, to whom they are both essential; to make mercy exceed justice in him, in whom both are infinite! Darest thou hope God can be so kind to thee, as to be unjust to himself? God will be just: go thou on to presume, and perish.

There can be no satisfaction by any recompense of ours. An infinite justice is offended; an infinite punishment is deserved by every sin; and every man's sins are as near to infinite as number can make them. Our best endeavour is worse than finite, imperfect and faulty: if it could be perfect,

we owe it all in present: what we are bound to do in present, cannot make amends for what we have not done in time past; which while we offer to God as good payment, we do, with the profane traveller, think to please him with empty date-shells, in lieu of preservation. Where shall we then find a payment of infinite value, but in him, which is only and all infinite? the dignity of whose person, being infinite, gave such worth to his satisfaction, that what he suffered in short time, was proportionable to what we should have suffered beyond all times. He did all, suffered all, paid all: he did it for us; we, in him.

Where shall I begin to wonder at thee, O thou divine and eternal Peace-Maker, the Saviour of men, the Anointed of God, Mediator between God and man; in whom there is nothing which doth not exceed, not only the conceit, but the very wonder of angels; who saw thee in thy humiliation with silence, and adore thee in thy glory with perpetual praises and rejoicings? Thou wast for ever of thyself as God, of the Father as the Son; the Eternal Son of an Eternal Father; not later in being, not less in dignity, not other in substance; begotten, without diminution of him that begot thee, while he communicated that wholly to thee which he retained wholly in himself, because both were infinite, without inequality of nature, without division of essence: when, being in this estate, thine infinite love and mercy to desperate mankind caused thee, O Saviour, to empty thyself of thy glory, that thou mightst put on our shame and misery. Wherefore, not ceasing to be God as thou wert, thou beganst to be what thou wert not, man; to the end that thou mightst be a

perfect mediator betwixt God and man, which wert both in one person; God, that thou mightst satisfy; man, that thou mightst suffer: that, since man had sinned, and God was offended, thou, which wert God and man, mightst satisfy God for man. None but thyself, which art the Eternal Word, can express the depth of this mystery, that God should be clothed with flesh, come down to men, and become man, that man might be exalted into the highest heavens, and that our nature might be taken into the fellowship of the Deity: that he, to whom all powers in heaven bowed, and thought it their honour to be serviceable, should come down to be a servant to his slaves, a ransom for his enemies; together with our nature taking up our very infirmities, our shame, our torments, and bearing our sins without sin: that thou, whom the heavens were too strait to contain, shouldst lay thyself in an obscure cratch; thou, which wert attended of angels, shouldst be derided of men, rejected of thine own, persecuted by tyrants, tempted with devils, betrayed of thy servant, crucified among thieves, and, which was worse than all these, in thine own apprehension, for the time, as forsaken of thy Father: that thou, whom our sins had pierced, shouldst, for our sins, both sweat drops of blood in the garden, and pour out streams of blood upon the cross.

Oh, the invaluable purchase of our peace! O ransom enough for more worlds! Thou, which wert in the counsel of thy Father, the Lamb slain from the beginning of time, comest now, in fulness of time, to be slain by man for man; being at once the sacrifice offered, the priest that did offer, and the God to whom it was offered. How

graciously didst thou both proclaim our peace, as a prophet, in the time of thy life upon earth; and purchase it, by thy blood, as a priest, at thy death; and now confirmest and appliest it, as a King, in heaven! By thee only it was procured; by thee it is proffered. O mercy without example, without measure! God offers peace to man: the holy seeks to the unjust; the potter, to the clay; the king, to the traitor. We are unworthy that we should be received to peace, though we desired it: what are we then, that we should have peace offered for the receiving? An easy condition of so great a benefit! He requires us not to earn it, but to accept it of him: what could he give more? what could he require less of us?[1]

SECTION VI.

The Receipt of our Peace offered by Faith.—A Corollary of the benefit of this Receipt.—The vain shifts of the Guilty.

The purchase, therefore, of our peace was paid at once; yet must be severally reckoned to every soul whom it shall benefit. If we have not a hand to take what Christ's hand doth either hold or offer, what is sufficient in him cannot be effectual to us. The spiritual hand, whereby we apprehend the sweet offers of our Saviour, is faith; which, in short, is no other, than an affiance in the Mediator: receive peace, and be happy; believe, and thou hast received. From hence it is, that we are interested in all that either God hath promised or

Christ hath performed: hence have we from God both forgiveness and love; the ground of all, either peace or glory. Hence, of enemies we become more than friends, sons; and, as sons, may both expect and challenge, not only careful provision and safe protection on earth, but an everlasting patrimony above. This field is so spacious, that it were easy for a man to lose himself in it: and if I should spend all my pilgrimage in this walk, my time would sooner end than my way; wherein I would have measured more paces, were it not, that our scope is not so much to magnify the benefit of our peace, as to seek how to obtain it.

Behold now, after we have sought heaven and earth, where only the wearied dove may find an olive of peace. The apprehending of this all-sufficient satisfaction makes it ours: upon our satisfaction, we have remission; upon remission follows reconciliation; upon our reconciliation, peace. When, therefore, thy conscience, like a stern sergeant, shall catch thee by the throat, and arrest thee upon God's debt, let thy only plea be, that thou hast already paid it: bring forth that bloody acquittance, sealed to thee from heaven upon thy true faith; straightway thou shalt see the fierce and terrible look of thy conscience changed into friendly smiles; and that rough and violent hand, that was ready to drag thee to prison, shall now lovingly embrace thee, and fight for thee against all the wrongful attempts of any spiritual adversary. O heavenly peace, and more than peace, friendship; whereby alone we are leagued with ourselves, and God with us; which whoever wants, shall find a sad remembrancer in the midst of his dissembled jollity, and, after all vain strifes, shall

fall into many secret dumps, from which his guilty heart shall deny to be cheered, though all the world were his minstrel! O pleasure worthy to be pitied, and laughter worthy of tears, that is without this!

Go then, foolish man; and when thou feelest any check of thy sin, seek after thy jocundest companions; deceive the time and thyself with merry purposes, with busy games; feast away thy cares; bury them and thyself in wine and sleep: after all these frivolous deferrings, it will return upon thee when thou wakest, perhaps ere thou wakest; nor will be repelled till it have showed thee thy hell; nor, when it hath showed thee, will yet be repelled. So the stricken deer, having received a deadly arrow, whose shaft shaken out hath left the head behind it, runs from one thicket to another; not able to change his pain with his places, but finding his wounds still the worse with continuance. Ah, fool! thy soul festereth within; and is affected so much more dangerously, by how much less it appeareth. Thou mayst while thyself with variety: thou canst not ease thee. Sin owes thee a spite, and will pay it thee; perhaps, when thou art in worse case to sustain it. This flitting doth but provide for a further violence at last. I have seen a little stream of no noise, which, upon his stoppage, hath swelled up, and with a loud gushing hath borne over the heap of turfs wherewith it was resisted. Thy death-bed shall smart for these wilful adjournings of repentance; whereon how many have we heard raving of their old neglected sins, and fearfully despairing when they have had most need of comfort! In sum, there is no way but this: thy conscience must have either satisfaction or

torment. Discharge thy sin betimes, and be at peace. He never breaks his sleep for debt, that pays when he takes up.

SECTION VII.

Solicitation of Sin remedied.—The ordering of Affections.

Neither can it suffice for peace, to have crossed the old scroll of our sins, if we prevent not the future: yea, the present very importunity of temptation breeds unquietness. Sin, where it hath got a haunt, looketh for more, as humours that fall towards their old issue: and, if it be not strongly repelled, doth near as much vex us with soliciting, as with yielding. Let others envy their happiness, I shall never think their life so much as quiet, whose doors are continually beaten and their morning sleep broken with early clients; whose entries are daily thronged with suitors, pressing near for the next audience; much less, that through their remiss answers are daily haunted with traitors or other instruments of villany, offering their mischievous service, and inciting them to some pestilent enterprize. Such are temptations to the soul; whereof it cannot be rid so long as it holds them in any hope of entertainment; and so long they will hope to prevail, while we give them but a cold and timorous denial. Suitors are drawn on with an easy repulse; counting that as half granted which is but faintly gainsayed. Peremptory answers can only put sin out of heart for any second attempts: it is ever impudent, when it meets not with a bold

heart; hoping to prevail by wearying us, and wearying us by entreaties. Let all suggestions, therefore, find thee resolute: so shall thy soul find itself at rest; for as the devil, so sin, his natural brood, flies away with resistance.

To which purpose all our heady and disordered affections, which are the secret factors of sin and Satan, must be restrained by a strong and yet temperate command of reason and religion: these, if they find the reins loose in their necks, like to the wild horses of that chaste hunter in the tragedy,[2] carry us over hills and rocks; and never leave us, till we be dismembered, and they breathless: but, contrarily, if they be pulled in with the sudden violence of a strait hand, they fall to plunging and careering, and never leave, till their saddle be empty, and even then dangerously strike at their prostrate rider. If there be any exercise of Christian wisdom, it is in the managing of these unruly affections; which are not more necessary in their best use, than pernicious in their misgovernance. Reason hath always been busy, in undertaking this so necessary a moderation: wherein, although she have prevailed with some of colder temper, yet those which have been of more stubborn metal, like unto grown scholars which scorn the ferule that ruled their minority, have still despised her weak endeavours. Only Christianity hath this power; which, with our second birth, gives us a new nature: so that now, if excess of passions be natural to us as men, the order of them is natural to us as Christians. Reason bids the angry man say over his alphabet, ere he give his answer;

[2] Seneca, Hippolytus, Act iv.—Ed.

hoping, by this intermission of time, to gain the mitigation of his rage: he was never thoroughly angry that can endure the recital of so many idle letters. Christianity gives not rules, but power, to avoid this short madness. It was a wise speech that is reported of our best and last cardinal,[1] (I hope,) that this island either did or shall see; who, when a skilful astrologer, upon the calculation of his nativity, had foretold him some specialties concerning his future estate, answered, "Such perhaps I was born: but, since that time, I have been born again; and my second nativity hath crossed my first." The power of nature is a good plea for those that acknowledge nothing above nature: but, for a Christian to excuse his intemperateness by his natural inclination, and to say, "I am born choleric, sullen, amorous," is an apology worse than the fault. Wherefore serves religion, but to subdue or govern nature? We are so much Christians as we can rule ourselves; the rest is but form and speculation. Yea, the very thought of our profession is so powerful, that, (like unto that precious stone,) being cast into this sea, it assuageth those inward tempests that were raised by the affections. The unregenerate mind is not capable of this power; and, therefore, through the continual mutinies of his passions, cannot but be subject to perpetual unquietness. There is neither remedy nor hope in this estate. But the Christian soul, that hath inured itself to the awe of God and the exercises of true mortification, by the only looking up at his holy profession, cureth the burning venom of these fiery serpents that lurk within him. Hast

[1] Cardinal Pole.

thou nothing but nature? Resolve to look for no peace. God is not prodigal, to cast away his best blessings on so unworthy subjects. Art thou a Christian? do but remember thou art so; and then, if thou darest, if thou canst, yield to the excess of passions.

SECTION VIII.

The second main enemy to Peace—Crosses.

Hitherto, [we have considered,] the most inward and dangerous enemy of our peace; which, if we have once mastered, the other field shall be fought and won with less blood. Crosses disquiet us, either in their present feeling, or their expectation: both of them, when they meet with weak minds, so extremely distempering them, that the patient, for the time, is not himself. How many have we known, which through a lingering disease, weary of their pain, weary of their lives, have made their own hands their executioners! How many, meeting with a headstrong grief, which they could not manage, have by the violence of it, been carried quite from their wits! How many millions, what for incurable maladies, what for losses, what for defamations, what for sad accidents to their children, rub out their lives in perpetual discontentment; therefore living because they cannot yet die, not for that they like to live! If there could be any human receipt prescribed to avoid evils, it would be purchased at a high rate: but, both it is impossible, that earth should redress that which is sent from heaven; and, if it could be done, even the want of miseries would prove miserable;

for the mind, cloyed with continual felicity, would grow a burden to itself, loathing that, at last, which intermission would have made pleasant. Give a free horse the full reins, and he will soon tire. Summer is the sweetest season by all consents, wherein the earth is both most rich with increase, and most gorgeous for ornament; yet, if it were not received with interchanges of cold frosts and piercing winds, who could live? Summer would be no summer, if winter did not both lead it in and follow it. We may not, therefore, either hope or strive to escape all crosses; some we may: what thou canst, fly from; what thou canst not, allay and mitigate. In crosses, universally, let this be thy rule: make thyself none; escape some; bear the rest; sweeten all.

SECTION IX.

Of Crosses that arise from conceit.

Apprehension gives life to crosses; and, if some be simply, most are as they are taken.[1] I have seen many, which when God hath meant them no hurt, have framed themselves crosses out of imagination; and have found that insupportable for weight which in truth never was, neither had ever any but a fancied being: others again, laughing out heavy afflictions, for which they were bemoaned of the beholders. One receives a deadly wound, and looks not so much as pale at the smart; another

[1] i. e. Though some crosses be such essentially in their own nature, the greater part are so, or not, accordingly as they are received.—Ed.

hears of many losses, and, like Zeno, after news of his shipwreck, as altogether passionless, goes to his rest, not breaking an hour's sleep for that which would break the heart of some others. Greenham, that saint of ours, whom it cannot disparage that he was reserved for our so loose an age, can lie spread quietly upon the form, looking for the chirurgeon's knife; binding himself as fast with a resolved patience, as others with strongest cords; abiding his flesh carved, and his bowels rifled, and not stirring more than if he felt not, while others trembled to expect, and shrink to feel but the pricking of a vein. There can be no remedy for imaginary crosses but wisdom, which shall teach us to esteem of all events as they are; like a true glass representing all things to our minds in their due proportion; so as crosses may not seem that are not, nor little and gentle ones seem great and intolerable. Give thy body hellebore, thy mind good counsel, thine ear to thy friend; and these fantastical evils shall vanish away like themselves.

SECTION X.

Of true and real Crosses.

It were idle advice, to bid men avoid evils. Nature hath, by a secret instinct, taught brute creatures so much, whether wit or sagacity: and our self-love, making the best advantage of reason, will easily make us so wise and careful. It is more worth our labour, since our life is so open to calamities, and nature to impatience, to teach men to bear what evils they cannot avoid; and how, by a well-

disposedness of mind, we may correct the iniquity of all hard events. Wherein it is hardly credible how much good art and precepts of resolution may avail us. I have seen one man, by the help of a little engine, lift up that weight alone, which forty helping hands, by their clear strength, might have endeavoured in vain. We live here in an ocean of troubles, wherein we can see no firm land; one wave falling upon another, ere the former have wrought all his spite. Mischiefs strive for places, as if they feared to lose their room if they hasted not. So many good things as we have, so many evils arise from their privation; besides no fewer real and positive evils that afflict us. To prescribe and apply receipts to every particular cross, were to write a Salmeron-like Commentary upon Petrarch's Remedies;[1] and I doubt whether so, the work would be perfect: a life would be too little to write it, and but enough to read it.

SECTION XI.

The first remedy of Crosses, before they come.

The same medicines cannot help all diseases of the body; of the soul, they may. We see fencers give their scholars the same common rules of position, of warding and wielding their weapon for offence,

[1] Salmeron, one of the earliest of the Jesuits, wrote a voluminous Commentary on the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Canonical Epistles.—Among the Latin works of Petrarch, at present so much and so undeservedly neglected, one of the principal is his treatise *de Remediis utriusque Fortunæ*; "Concerning the Remedies of prosperous and adverse Fortune."—Ed.

for defence, against all comers: such universal precepts there are for crosses.

In the first whereof, I would prescribe expectation, that either killeth or abateth evils. For crosses, after the nature of the cockatrice, die if they be foreseen; whether this providence makes us more strong to resist, or by some secret power makes them more unable to assault us. It is not credible what a fore-resolved mind can do, can suffer. Could our English Milo, of whom Spain yet speaketh since their last peace, have overthrown that furious beast, made now more violent through the rage of his baiting, if he had not settled himself in his station, and expected? The frighted multitude ran away from that over-earnest sport, which begun in pleasure, ended in terror. If he had turned his back with the rest, where had been his safety, where his glory and reward? Now he stood still, expected, overcame; by one fact he at once preserved, honoured, enriched himself. Evils will come never the sooner, for that thou lookest for them: they will come the easier: it is a labour well lost if they come not; and well bestowed, if they do come. We are sure the worst may come; why should we be secure that it will not? Suddenness finds weak minds secure, makes them miserable, leaves them desperate. The best way therefore is, to make things present, in conceit, before they come; that they may be half past in their violence, when they do come: even as with wooden wasters,[1] we learn to play at the sharp. As, therefore, good soldiers exercise themselves long at the pale; and there use those activities, which afterwards they shall practise upon a true adversary; so must

[1] A kind of cudgels.—Ed. [2] The rapier.—Ed.

we present to ourselves imaginary crosses, and manage them in our mind before God sends them in event. "Now I eat, sleep, digest all soundly, without complaint: what if a languishing disease should bereave me of my appetite and rest? that I should see dainties and loathe them; surfeiting of the very smell, of the thought of the best dishes? that I should count the lingering hours, and think Hezekiah's long day returned; wearying myself with changing sides, and wishing anything but what I am? How could I take this distemper? Now I have, if not what I would, yet what I need; as not abounding with idle superfluities, so not straitened with penury of necessary things: what if poverty should rush upon me, as an armed man; spoiling me of all my little that I had, and send me to the fountain for my best cellar—to the ground, for my bed—for my bread, to another's cupboard—for my clothes, to the broker's shop, or my friend's wardrobe? How could I brook this want? I am now at at home, walking in mine own grounds, looking on my young plants, the hope of posterity; considering the nature, advantages, or fears of my soil, enjoying the patrimony of my fathers: what if, for my religion, or the malicious sentence of some great one, I should be exiled from my country; wandering amongst those whose habit, language, fashion, my ignorance shall make me wonder at; where the solitude of places, and strangeness of persons shall make my life uncomfortable? How could I abide the smell of foreign smoke? How should I take the contempt and hard usage that waits upon strangers?" Thy prosperity is idle and ill spent, if it be not meddled[1] with such forecasting and

[1] Mixed.—Ed.

wisely suspicious thoughts; if it be wholly bestowed in enjoying, no whit in preventing: like unto a foolish city, which, notwithstanding a dangerous situation, spends all her wealth in rich furniture of chambers and state houses; while they bestow not one shovelful of earth on outward bulwarks, to their defence: this is but to make our enemies the happier, and ourselves the more readily miserable.

If thou wilt not, therefore, be oppressed with evils, EXPECT and EXERCISE: exercise thyself with conceits of evils; expect the evils themselves: yea, exercise thyself in expectation; so, while the mind pleaseth itself in thinking, "Yet I am not thus," it prepareth itself against it may be so. And if some, that have been good at the foils, have proved cowardly at the sharp; yet, on the contrary, whoever durst point a single combat in the field that hath not been somewhat trained in the fence-school?

SECTION XII.

The second remedy of Crosses, when they are come: from their Author.

NEITHER doth it a little blunt the edge of evils, to consider that they come from a Divine hand, whose Almighty power is guided by a most wise providence, and tempered with a fatherly love. Even the savage creatures will be smitten of their keeper, and repine not: if of a stranger, they tear him in pieces. He strikes me, that made me, that moderates the world: why struggle I with him; why, with myself? Am I a fool, or a rebel? A fool, if I be ignorant whence my crosses come: a rebel, if

I know it, and be impatient. My sufferings are from a God, from my God; he hath destined me every dram of sorrow that I feel: "Thus much thou shalt abide; and here shall thy miseries be stinted." All worldly helps cannot abate them; all powers of hell cannot add one scruple to their weight that he hath allotted me: I must, therefore, either blaspheme God in my heart, detracting from his infinite justice, wisdom, power, mercy, which all stand inviolable, when millions of such worms as I am, are gone to dust; or else confess that I ought to be patient. And if I profess I should be that I will not, I befool myself, and bewray miserable impotency. But (as impatience is full of excuse) it was thine own rash improvidence, or the spite of thine enemy, that impoverished, that defamed thee: it was the malignity of some unwholesome dish, or some gross corrupted air that hath distempered thee. Ah, foolish cur! why dost thou bite at the stone which could never have hurt thee, but from the hand that threw it? If I wound thee, what matters it, whether with mine own sword, or thine, or another's? God strikes some immediately from heaven, with his own arm, or with the arm of angels; others he buffets with their own hands; some by the revenging sword of an enemy; others with the fist of his dumb creatures. God strikes in all; his hand moves theirs. If thou see it not, blame thy carnal eyes. Why dost thou fault[1] the instrument while thou knowest the agent? Even the dying thief pardons the executioner; exclaims on his unjust judge, or his malicious accusers. Either, then, blame the first mover, or dis-

[1] Blame.—Ed.

charge the means; which as they could not have touched thee, but as from him, so from him they have afflicted thee justly, wrongfully perhaps as in themselves.

SECTION XIII.

The third antidote of Crosses; from their effect.

But neither seemeth it enough to be patient in crosses, if we be not thankful also. Good things challenge more than bare contentment. Crosses, unjustly termed evils, as they are sent of him that is all goodness, so they are sent for good, and his end cannot be frustrate. What greater good can be to the diseased man, than fit and proper physic to recure him? Crosses are the only medicines of sick minds. Thy sound body carries within it a sick soul: thou feelest it not, perhaps: so much more art thou sick, and so much more dangerously. Perhaps thou labourest of some plethory of pride, or of some dropsy of covetousness, or the staggers of inconstancy, or some fever of luxury, or consumption of envy, or perhaps of the lethargy of idleness, or of the frenzy of anger:—it is a rare soul that hath not some notable disease:—only crosses are thy remedies. What if they be unpleasant? they are physic: tis enough if they be wholesome. Not pleasant taste, but the secret virtue commends medicines. If they cure thee they shall please thee, even in displeasing; or else thou lovest thy palate above thy soul. What madness is this? When thou complainest of a bodily disease, thou sendest to the physician, that he may send thee not

savoury, but wholesome potions: thou receivest them in spite of thine abhorring stomach; and, withal, both thankest and rewardest the physician. Thy soul is sick; thy heavenly Physician sees it, and pities thee, ere thou thyself; and, unsent to, sends thee not a plausible, but a sovereign remedy: thou loathest the savour, and rather wilt hazard thy life than offend thy palate; and, instead of thanks, repinest at, revilest the Physician. How comes it, that we love ourselves so little (if at least we count our souls the best or any part) as that we would rather undergo death than pain; choosing rather wilful sickness than a harsh remedy? Surely, we men are mere fools in the estimation of our own good: like children, our choice is led altogether by show, no whit by substance. We cry after every well-seeming toy, and put from us solid proffers of good things. The wise Arbitrator of all things sees our folly, and corrects it; withholding our idle desires, and forcing upon us the sound good we refuse: it is second folly in us, if we thank him not. The foolish babe cries for his father's bright knife, or gilded pills. The wiser father knows that they can but hurt him; and therefore withholds them after all his tears. The child thinks he is used but unkindly. Every wise man, and himself at more years, can say, it was but childish folly, in desiring it, in complaining that he missed it. The loss of wealth, friends, health, is sometimes gain to us. Thy body, thy estate is worse: thy soul is better; why complainest thou?

SECTION XIV.

The fourth antidote of Crosses; from their issue.

Nay, it shall not be enough, methinks, if only we be but contented and thankful, if not also cheerful in afflictions; if that, as we feel their pain, so we look not to their end; although, indeed, this is not more requisite than rarely found, as being proper only to the good heart. Every bird can sing in a clear heaven, in a temperate spring: that one, as most familiar, so is most commended, that sings merry notes in the midst of a shower or the dead of winter. Every epicure can enlarge his heart to mirth in the midst of his cups and dalliance: only the three children can sing in the furnace; Paul and Silas in the stocks; martyrs at the stake. It is from heaven that this joy comes, so contrary to all earthly occasions; bred in the faithful heart, through a serious and feeling respect to the issue of what he feels, the quiet and untroubled fruit of his righteousness: glory, the crown after his fight; after his minute of pain, eternity of joy. He never looked over the threshold of heaven, that cannot more rejoice that he shall be glorious, than mourn in present that he is miserable.

SECTION XV.

Of the importunity and terror of Death.

Yea, this consideration is so powerful, that it alone is able to make a part against the fear or sense of the last and greatest of all terribles, death itself:

which, in the conscience of his own dreadfulness, justly laughs at all the vain human precepts of tranquillity; appalling the most resolute, and vexing the most cheerful minds. Neither profane Lucretius, with all his epicurean rules of confidence, nor drunken Anacreon, with all his wanton odes, can shift off the importunate and violent horror of this adversary. Seest thou the Chaldean tyrant beset with the sacred bowls of Jerusalem, the late spoils of God's temple; and, in contempt of their owner, carousing healths to his queens, concubines, peers; singing amidst his cups triumphant carols of praise to his molten and carved gods? Wouldst thou ever suspect that this high courage could be abated; or, that this sumptuous and presumptuous banquet, after so royal and jocund continuance, should have any other conclusion but pleasure? Stay but one hour longer, and thou shalt see that face that now shines with a ruddy gloss, according to the colour of his liquor, look pale and ghastly, stained with the colours of fear and death; and that proud hand, which now lifts up his massy goblets, in defiance of God, tremble like a leaf in a storm; and those strong knees, which never stooped to the burden of their laden body, now not able to bear up themselves, but loosened with a sudden palsy of fear, one knocking against the other; and all this, for that death writes him a letter of summons, to appear that night before him; and, accordingly, ere the next sun, sent two eunuchs, for his honourable conveyance into another world. Where now are those delicate morsels, those deep draughts, those merry ditties, wherewith the palate and ear so pleased themselves? What is now become of all those cheerful looks, loose laughters,

stately port, revels, triumphs of the feasting court? Why doth none of his gallant nobles revive the fainted courage of their lord with a new cup, or with some stirring jest shake him out of this unseasonable melancholy? O death, how imperious art thou to carnal minds! aggravating their misery, not only by expectation of future pain, but by the remembrance of the wonted causes of their joy; and not suffering them to see aught but what may torment them! Even that monster of the Cæsars,[1] that had been so well acquainted with blood, and never had found better sport than in cutting of throats, when now it came to his own turn, how effeminate, how desperately cowardous did he show himself! to the wonder of all readers, that he, which was ever so valliant in killing, should be so womanishly heartless in dying.

SECTION XVI.

The grounds of the Fear of Death.

THERE are that fear not so much to be dead as to die; the very act of dissolution frightening them with a tormenting expectation of a short, but intolerable painfulness. Which let if the wisdom of God had not interposed to timorous nature, there would have been many more Lucretias, Cleopatras, Ahithophels; and good laws should have found little opportunity of execution, through the wilful funerals of malefactors. For the soul, that comes into the body without any, at least sensible, pleasure, departs not from it without an extremity of

[1] Nero.

pain; which, varying according to the manner and means of separation, yet, in all violent deaths especially, retaineth a violence not to be avoided, hard to be endured. And if diseases, which are destined toward death as their end, be so painful, what must the end and perfection of diseases be; since as diseases are the maladies of the body, so death is the malady of diseases?

There are, that fear not so much to die as to be dead. If the pang be bitter, yet it is but short: the comfortless state of the dead strikes some that could well resolve for the act of the passage. Not the worst of the heathen emperors[1] made that moanful ditty on his death-bed, wherein he bewrayeth, to all memory, much feeling pity of his soul, for her doubtful and impotent condition after her departure. How doth Plato's worldling bewail the misery of the grave; besides all respect of pain! "Woe is me, that I shall lie alone, rotting in the silent earth, amongst the crawling worms, not seeing aught above, not seen."

Very not-being is sufficiently abhorred of nature, if death had no more to make it fearful. But those that have lived under light enough to show them the gates of hell, after their passage through the gates of death, and have learned that death is not only horrible for our not-being here, but for being infinitely, eternally miserable in a future world (nor so much for the dissolution of life, as the beginning of torment) those cannot, without the certain hope of their immunity, but carnally fear to die, and hellishly fear to be dead. For, if it be

[1] Adrian. This emperor's address to his departing spirit, is beautifully adapted to the higher knowledge and assured hopes of Christianity, in Pope's admired ode—"The Dying Christian to his Soul."—Ed.

such pain to die, what is it to be ever dying? And if the straining and luxation of one joint can so afflict us, what shall the racking of the whole body, and the torturing of the soul, whose animation alone makes the body to feel and complain of smart? And if men have devised such exquisite torments, what can spirits, more subtle, more malicious? And if our momentary sufferings seem long, how long shall that be that is eternal? And if the sorrows indifferently incident to God's dear ones upon earth be so extreme as sometimes to drive them within sight of despairing, what shall those be, that are reserved only for those that hate him, and that he hateth? None but those who have heard the desperate complaints of some guilty Spira, or whose souls have been a little scorched with these flames, can enough conceive of the horror of this estate: it being the policy of our common enemy to conceal it so long, that we may see and feel it at once, lest we should fear it before it be too late to be avoided.

SECTION XVII.

Remedy of the last and greatest breach of Peace, arising from Death.

Now when this great adversary, like a proud giant, comes stalking out in his fearful shape, and insults over our frail mortality, daring the world to match him with an equal champion; while a whole host of worldlings show him their backs for fear, the true Christian, armed only with confidence and resolution of his future happiness, dares boldly en-

counter him, and can wound him in the forehead, the wonted seat of terror; and trampling upon him, can cut off his head with his own sword, and victoriously returning, can sing in triumph, 'O death, where is thy sting?' A happy victory! We die and are not foiled; yea, we are conquerors in dying; we could not overcome death if we died not. That dissolution is well bestowed that parts the soul from the body, that it may unite both to God. All our life here, as that heavenly doctor (Augustin) well terms it, is but a vital death. How advantageous is that death that determines this false and dying life, and begins a true one above all the titles of happiness!

The Epicure or Sadducee dare not die, for fear of not being: the guilty and loose worldling dares not die, for fear of being miserable: the distrustful and doubting semi-christian dares not die, because he knows not whether he shall be or miserable, or not be at all: the resolved Christian dares, and would die, because he knows he shall be happy; and looking merrily towards heaven, the place of his rest, can unfeignedly say, "I desire to be dissolved: I see thee, my home, I see thee, (a sweet and glorious home after a weary pilgrimage,) I see thee: and now, after many lingering hopes, I aspire to thee. How oft have I looked up at thee, with admiration and ravishment of soul; and, by the goodly beams that I have seen, guessed at the glory that is above them! How oft have I scorned these dead and unpleasant pleasures of earth, in comparison of thine! I come now, my joys, I come to possess you: I come, through pain and death; yea, if hell itself were in the way betwixt you and me, I would pass through hell itself to enjoy you."

And, in truth, if that heathen Cleombrotus, a follower of the ancient academy, but upon only reading of his master Plato's Discourses of the Immortality of the Soul,[1] could cast down himself headlong from a high rock, and wilfully break his neck, that he might be possessed of that immortality which he believed to follow upon death, how contented should they be to die, that know they shall be more than immortal, glorious! He went, not in a hate of the flesh, as the patrician heretics of old,[2] but in a blind love to his soul, out of bare opinion; we, upon a holy love, grounded upon assured knowledge: he, upon an opinion of future life; we, on knowledge of future glory: he went unsent for; we, called for by our Maker. Why should his courage exceed ours, since our ground, our estate, so far exceeds his?

Even this age, within the reach of our memory, bred that peremptory Italian, which, in imitation of the old Roman courage, lest in that degenerated nation there should be no step left of the qualities of their ancestors, entering upon his torment for killing a tyrant, cheered himself with this confidence: "My death is sharp: my fame shall be everlasting"[3]—The voice of a Roman, not of a Christian. My fame shall be eternal: an idle comfort! My fame shall live; not my soul live to see it. What shall it avail thee to be talked of, while thou art not? Then fame only is precious when a man lives to enjoy it. The fame that survives the soul is bootless. Yet even this hope cheered him against the violence of his death. What

[1] Tuscul. Cicero, Callimachus, Epigram.
[2] Augustine, de Hæres. [3] "Mors acerba: fama perpetua."

should it do us, that (not our fame, but) our life, our glory after death, cannot die? He that hath Stephen's eyes, to look into heaven, cannot but have the tongue of the saints, 'Come, Lord: how long?' That man, seeing the glory of the end, cannot but contemn the hardness of the way. But, who wants those eyes, if he say and swear that he fears not death, believe him not; if he protest his tranquillity, and yet fear death, believe him not: believe him not if he say he is not miserable.

SECTION XVIII.

The second rank of the Enemies of Peace.—The vanity and unprofitableness of Riches—the first Enemy on the right hand.

These are enemies on the left hand. There want not some on the right, which, with less profession of hostility, hurt no less: not so easily perceived, because they distemper the mind, not without some kind of pleasure. Surfeit kills more than famine. These are the over-desiring and over-joying of these earthly things. All immoderations are enemies; as to health, so to peace.[1] He that desires, wants as much as he that hath nothing. The drunken man is as thirsty as the sweating traveller. Hence are the studies, cares, fears, jealousies, hopes, griefs, envies, wishes, platforms of achieving, alterations of purposes, and a thousand like; whereof each one is enough to make the life troublesome.

[1] Hippocr. Aphor.

One is sick of his neighbour's field, whose misshapen angles disfigure his, and hinder his lordship of entireness: what he hath is not regarded, for the want of what he cannot have. Another feeds on crusts, to purchase what he must leave, perhaps, to a fool; or, which is not much better, to a prodigal heir. Another, in the extremity of covetous folly, chooses to die an unpitied death; hanging himself for the fall of the market, while the commons laugh at that loss, and in their speeches epitaph upon him as on that pope, "He lived as a wolf, and died as a dog."[1] One cares not what attendance he dances all hours, on whose stairs he sits, what vices he soothes, what deformities he imitates, what servile offices he doth, in a hope to rise. Another stomachs the covered head and stiff knee of his inferior; angry that other men think him not so good as he thinks himself. Another eats his own heart, with envy at the richer furniture, and better estate, or more honour of his neighbour; thinking his own not good, because another hath better. Another vexeth himself with a word of disgrace, passed from the mouth of an enemy, which he neither can digest nor cast up; resolving, because another will be his enemy, to be his own. These humours are as manifold as there are men that seem prosperous.

For the avoiding of all which ridiculous and yet spiteful inconveniences, the mind must be settled in a persuasion of the worthlessness of these out-

[1] Boniface VIII. Celestine V., his immediate predecessor, is said to have prophesied concerning this pope, "that he would enter upon his office like a fox, reign like a lion, and die like a dog." Whether this saying was really uttered before or forged after his promotion, it was certainly in a great measure verified.—See Bower's *Hist. of the Popes*. Vol. vi. p. 372.—Ed.

ward things. Let it know, that these riches have made many prouder, none better; that, as never man was, so never wise man thought himself better for enjoying them. Would that wise philosopher[1] have cast his gold into the sea, if he had not known he should live more happily without it? If he knew not the use of riches, he was no wise man: if he knew not the best way to quietness, he was no philosopher: now, even by the voice of their oracle, he was confessed to be both; yet cast away his gold that he might be happy.[2] Would that wise prophet have prayed as well against riches as poverty?[3] Would so many great men, whereof our little island hath yielded nine crowned kings, while it was held of old by the Saxons, after they had continued their life in the throne, have ended it in the cell, and changed their sceptre for a book, if they could have found as much felicity in the highest estate as security in the lowest? I hear Peter and John, the eldest and dearest apostles, say, 'Gold and silver have I none?' I hear the devil say, "All these will I give thee; and they are mine to give:" whether shall I desire to be in the state of these saints, or that devil? He was, therefore, a better husband[4] than a philosopher, that first termed riches goods; and he mended the title well, that, adding a fit epithet, called them goods of fortune; false goods ascribed to a false patron. There is no fortune to give or guide riches; there is no true goodness in riches to be guided. His meaning then was, as I can inter-

[1] Socrates.

[2] A proof that, with Christians, deserves no credit; but, with heathens, commands it.

[3] Prov. xxx. 8.

[4] i. e. Economist.

pret it, to teach us, in this title, that it is a chance if ever riches were good to any. In sum, who would account those as riches, or those riches as goods, which hurt the owner, disquiet others; which the worst have; which the best have not; which those that have not, want not; which those want that have them; which are lost in a night, and a man is not worse when he hath lost them? It is true of them that we say of fire and water; they are good servants, ill masters. Make them thy slaves, they shall be goods indeed; in use, if not in nature; good to thyself, good to others by thee: but, if they be thy masters, thou hast condemned thyself to thine own galleys. If a servant rule, he proves a tyrant. What madness is this! thou hast made thyself at once a slave and a fool. What if thy chains be of gold? or if, with Heliogabalus, thou hast made thee silken halters? thy servitude may be glorious: it is no less miserable.

SECTION XIX.

The second Enemy on the right hand—Honour.

Honour, perhaps, is yet better: such is the confused opinion of those that know little; but a distinct and curious head shall find a hard task, to define in what point the goodness thereof consisteth.

Is it in high descent of blood? I would think so, if nature were tied by any law to produce children like qualified to their parents. But, although in the brute creatures she be ever thus regular, that ye shall never find a young pigeon hatched in an

eagle's nest; neither can I think that true, or if true it was monstrous, that Nicippus's sheep should yean a lion; yet, in the best creature, which hath his form and her attending qualities from above, with a likeness of face and features, is commonly found an unlikeness of disposition; only the earthly part follows the seed: wisdom, valour, virtue, are of another beginning. Shall I bow to a molten calf, because it was made of golden ear-rings? Shall I condemn all honour of the first head, though upon never so noble deserving, because it can show nothing before itself but a white shield? If Cæsar, or Agathocles, be a potter's son, shall I contemn him? Or if wise Bion be the son of an infamous courtesan,[1] shall the censorious lawyer raze him out of the catalogue, with *partus sequitur ventrem*?[2] Lastly, shall I account that good which is incident to the worst? Either, therefore, greatness must show some charter, wherein it is privileged with succession of virtue, or else the goodness of honour cannot consist in blood.

Is it, then, in the admiration and high opinion that others have conceived of thee, which draws all dutiful respect and humble offices from them to thee? O fickle good, that is ever in the keeping of others! especially of the unstable vulgar, that beast of many heads; whose divided tongues, as they never agree with each other, so seldom (whenever[3]) agree long with themselves. Do we not see the superstitious Lystrians, that erewhile would needs make Paul a god against his will; and, in devout zeal, drew crowned bulls to the altars of their new

[1] Olympia. Diogen. Laert.
[2] "The child follows the maternal parent."—Ed.
[3] If ever.—Ed.

Jupiter and Mercury?—violence can scarce hold them from sacrificing to him; now, not many hours after, gather up stones against him; having, in their conceits, turned him from a god into a malefactor; and are ready to kill him, instead of killing a sacrifice to him. Such is the multitude, and such the steadiness of their honour.

There, then, only is true honour, where blood and virtue meet together; the greatness whereof is from blood, the goodness from virtue. Rejoice, ye great men, that your blood is ennobled with the virtues and deserts of your ancestors. This only is yours; this only challengeth all unfeigned respect of your inferiors. Count it praiseworthy, not that you have, but that you deserve honour. Blood may be tainted: the opinion of the vulgar cannot be constant; only virtue is ever like itself, and only wins reverence even of those that hate it; without which, greatness is as a beacon of vice, to draw men's eyes the more to behold it; and those that see it dare loathe it, though they dare not censure it. So, while the knee bendeth the mind abhorreth, and telleth the body it honours an unworthy subject; within itself secretly comparing that vicious great man, on whom his submiss courtesy is cast away, to some goodly fair-bound Seneca's tragedies, that is curiously gilded without; which if a man open, he shall find Thyestes the tomb of his own children; or Oedipus the husband of his own mother; or some such monstrous part, which he at once reads and hates.

SECTION XX.

The second remedy of overjoyed Prosperity:—that it exposes to evil.

Let him think, that not only these outward things are not in themselves good, but that they expose their owners to misery; for, besides that God usually punishes our over-loving them with their loss, (because he thinks them unworthy rivals to himself, who challengeth all height of love as his only right,) so that the way to lose, is to love much; the largeness, moreover, either of affection or estate, makes an open way to ruin. While a man walks on plain ground he falls not; or, if he fall, he doth but measure his length on the ground, and rise again without harm; but he that climbeth high is in danger of falling; and, if he fall, of killing. All the sails hoisted, give vantage to a tempest; which, through the mariners' foresight giving timely room thereto by their fall, deliver the vessel from the danger of that gust, whose rage now passeth over with only beating her with waves for anger that he was prevented. So the larger our estate is, the fairer mark hath mischief given to hit; and, which is worse, that which makes us so easy to hit makes our wound more deep and grievous. If poor Codrus's house burn, he stands by and warms him with the flame, because he knows it is but the loss of an outside; which, by gathering some few sticks, straw, and clay, may, with little labour and no cost, be repaired; but when the many lofts of the rich man do one give fire to another, he cries out one while of his counting-house, another while of his wardrobe, then of some note chest, and straight of

some rich cabinet; and, lamenting both the frame and the furniture, is therefore impatient because he had something.

SECTION XXI.

The vanity of Pleasure; the third Enemy on the right hand.

But, if there be any sorceress upon earth, it is Pleasure; which so enchanteth the minds of men, and worketh the disturbance of our peace with such secret delight, that foolish men think this want of tranquillity, happiness. She turneth men into swine, with such sweet charms that they would not change their brutish nature for their former reason. "It is a good unquietness," say they, "that contenteth: it is a good enemy that profiteth." Is it any wonder that men should be sottish, when their reason is mastered with sensuality? Thou fool, thy pleasure contents thee: how much? how long? If she have not more befriended thee than ever she did any earthly favourite; yea, if she have not given thee more than she hath herself, thy best delight hath had some mixture of discontentment; for either some circumstance crosseth thy desire, or the inward distaste of thy conscience (checking thine appetite) permits thee not any entire fruition of thy joy. Even the sweetest of all flowers hath his thorns; and who can determine, whether the scent be more delectable or the pricks more irksome? It is enough for heaven to have absolute pleasures; which if they could be found here below, cer-

tainly that heaven, which is now not enough desired, would then be feared. God will have our pleasures here, according to the fashion of ourselves, compounded; so as the best delights may still savour of their earth.

See how that great king, which never had any match for wisdom, scarce ever any superior for wealth, traversed over all this inferior world, with diligent inquiry and observation, and all to find out that goodness of the children of men which they enjoy under the sun; abridging himself of nothing that either his eyes or his heart could suggest to him; as what is it, that he could not either know or purchase? and now, coming home to himself, after the disquisition of all natural and human things, complains, that 'Behold, all is' not only 'vanity,' but 'vexation.'

Go, then, thou wise scholar of experience, and make a more accurate search for that which he sought and missed. Perhaps, somewhere, betwixt the tallest cedar in Lebanon and the shrubby hyssop upon the wall, pleasure shrouded herself that she could not be descried of him; whether through ignorance or negligence: thine insight may be more piercing; thy means more commodious; thy success happier. If it were possible for any man to entertain such hopes, his vain experience could not make him a greater fool; it could but teach him what he is and knoweth not.

And yet, so imperfect as our pleasures are, they have their satiety; and as their continuance is not good, so their conclusion is worse: look to their end, and see how sudden, how bitter it is. Their only courtesy is to salute us with a farewell; and such a one as makes their salutation uncomfort-

able. This Dalila shows and speaks fair; but in the end she will bereave thee of thy strength, of thy sight, yea of thyself. These gnats fly about thine ears and make thee music awhile; but evermore they sting ere they part. Sorrow and repentance is the best end of pleasure; pain is yet worse; but the worst is despair. If thou miss of the first of these, one of the latter shall find thee; perhaps both. How much better is it for thee to want a little honey, than to be swollen up with a venomous sting!

Thus then the mind, resolved that these earthly things, honours, wealth, pleasures, are casual, unstable, deceitful, imperfect, dangerous, must learn to use them without trust, and to want them without grief; thinking still, "If I have them, I have some benefit with a great charge: if I have them not, with little respect of others, I have much security and ease in myself;" which once obtained, we cannot fare amiss in either estate; and without which, we cannot but miscarry in both.

SECTION XXII.

Positive rules of our Peace.—The fruition of God in holy exercises.

All the enemies of our inward peace are thus descried and discomfited. Which done, we have enough to preserve us from misery: but, since we moreover seek how to live well and happily, there yet remain those positive rules, whereby our tranquillity may be both had, continued, and confirmed.

Wherein, I fear not lest I should seem over di-

vine, in casting the anchor of quietness so deep as heaven, the only seat of constancy, while it can find no hold at all upon earth. All earthly things are full of variableness; and therefore, having no stay in themselves, can give none to us. He that will have and hold right tranquillity, must find in himself a sweet fruition of God, and feeling apprehension of his presence; that, when he finds manifold occasions of vexation in these earthly things, he, overlooking them all, and having recourse to his comforter, may find in him such matter of contentment that he may pass over all these petty grievances with contempt; which whosoever wants, may be secure, cannot be quiet.

The mind of man cannot but want some refuge; and, (as we say of the elephant,) cannot rest, unless it have something to lean upon. The covetous man, whose heaven is his chest, when he hears himself rated and cursed for oppressions, comes home; and, seeing his bags safe, applauds himself against all censures. The glutton, when he loseth friends or good name, yet joyeth in his well furnished table, and the laughter of his wine; more pleasing himself in one dish, than he can be grieved with all the world's miscarriage. The needy scholar, whose wealth lies all in his brain, cheers himself against iniquity of times, with the conceit of his knowledge. These starting holes the mind cannot want when it is hard driven.

Now when, as like to some chased Sisera, it shrowds itself under the harbour of these Jaels; although they give it house-room and milk for a time, yet, at last, either they entertain it with a nail in the temples; or, being guilty to their own impotency, send it out of themselves, for safety and

peace. For if the cross light in that which it made his refuge (as, if the covetous man be crossed in his riches,) what earthly thing can stay him from a desperate frenzy? Or, if the cross fall in a degree above the height of his stay (as, if the rich man be sick or dying, wherein all wealth is either contemned or remembered with anguish,) how do all his comforts, like vermin from a house on fire, run away from him, and leave him over to his ruin! while the soul, that hath placed his refuge above, is sure that the ground of his comfort cannot be matched with an earthly sorrow, cannot be made variable by the change of any event; but is infinitely above all casualties, and without all uncertainties.

What state is there, wherein this heavenly stay shall not afford me not only peace, but joy?

Am I in prison, or in the hell of prisons, in some dark, low, and desolate dungeon? Lo, there, Algerius, that sweet martyr, finds more light than above; and pities the darkness of our liberty.[1] We have but a sun to enlighten our world, which every cloud dimmeth, and hideth from our eyes: but the Father of lights, in respect of whom all the bright stars of heaven are but as the snuff of a dim candle, shines into his pit; and the presence of his glorious angels makes that a heaven to him, which the world purposed as a hell of discomfort. What walls can keep out that Infinite Spirit that fills all things? What darkness can be, where the God of this sun dwelleth? What sorrow, where he comforteth?

Am I wandering in banishment? Can I go whither God is not? What sea can divide betwixt

[1] Fox, Martyr.

him and me? Then would I fear exile, if I could be driven away, as well from God as my country. Now he is as much in all earths. His title is alike to all places; and mine in him. His sun shines to me; his sea, or earth, bears me up; his presence cheereth me, whithersoever I go. He cannot be said to flit that never changeth his host. He alone is a thousand companions: he alone is a world of friends. That man never knew what it was to be familiar with God, that complains of the want of home, of friends, of companions, while God is with him.

Am I contemned of the world? It is enough for me that I am honoured of God: of both, I cannot. The world would love me more, if I were less friends with God. It cannot hate me so much as God hates it. What care I to be hated of them whom God hateth? He is unworthy of God's favour, that cannot think it happiness enough without the world's. How easy is it for such a man, while the world disgraces him, at once to scorn and pity it, that it cannot think nothing more contemptible than itself!

I am impoverished with losses: that was never thoroughly good that may be lost. My riches will not lose me; yea, though I forego all, to my skin, yet have I not lost any part of my wealth: for if he be rich that hath something, how rich is he that hath the Maker and owner of all things!

I am weak and diseased in body: he cannot miscarry that hath his Maker for his physician. Yet my soul, the better part, is sound; for that cannot be weak whose strength God is. How many are sick in that, and complain not! I can be content to be let blood in the arm or *foot*, for the curing of the

head or heart. The health of the principal part is more joy to me, than it is trouble to be distempered in the inferior.

Let me know that God favours me; then I have liberty in prison, home in banishment, honour in contempt, in losses wealth, health in infirmity, life in death, and in all these, happiness.

And surely if our perfect fruition of God be our complete heaven, it must needs be that our inchoate[1] conversing with him is our heaven imperfectly, and the entrance into the other: which, methinks, differs from this not in the kind of it, but in the degree.

For the continuation of which happy society, since strangeness looseth acquaintance and breedeth neglect, on our part must be a daily renewing of heavenly familiarity, by seeking him up, even with the contempt of all inferior distraction; by talking with him in our secret invocations; by hearing his conference with us, and by mutual entertainment of each other in the sweet discourses of our daily meditations. He is a sullen and unsociable friend that wants words. God shall take no pleasure in us, if we be silent. The heart that is full of love cannot but have a busy tongue. All our talk with God is either suits or thanks: in them the Christian heart pours out itself to his Maker; and would not change this privilege for a world. All his annoyances, all his wants, all his dislikes are poured into the bosom of his invisible friend; who likes us still so much more as we ask more, as we complain more.

Oh the easy and happy recourse that the poor

[1] Begun.

soul hath to the high throne of heaven! We stay not for the holding out of a golden sceptre to warn our admission, before which our presence should be presumption and death. No hour is unseasonable, no person too base, no words too homely, no fact too hard, no importunity too great. We speak familiarly; we are heard, answered, comforted. Another while, God interchangeably speaks unto us, by the secret voice of his Spirit, or by the audible sound of his word: we hear, adore, answer him; by both which the mind so communicates itself to God, and hath God so plentifully communicated unto it, that hereby it grows to such a habit of heavenliness as that now it wants nothing, but dissolution, of full glory.

SECTION XXIII.

The subordinate rules of Tranquillity. 1. *For Actions: to refrain from all sin, and to perform all duty.*

Out of this main ground once settled in the heart, like as so many rivers from one common sea, flow those subordinate resolutions, which we require as necessary to our peace, whether in respect of our actions or our estate.

For our actions, there must be a secret vow passed in the soul, both of constant refraining from whatsoever may offend that Majesty we rest upon; and, above this, of true and canonical obedience to God, without all care of difficulty, and in spite of all contradictions of nature. Not out of the confidence of our own power: impotent men, who are

we, that we should either vow or perform? but, as he said, "Give what thou biddest, and bid what thou wilt." Hence the courage of Moses durst venture his hand to take up the crawling and hissing serpent. Hence Peter durst walk upon the pavement of the waves. Hence that heroical spirit of Luther, a man made of metal fit for so great a work, durst resolve and profess to enter into that forewarned city, though there had been as many devils in their streets as tiles on their houses.[1]

Both these vows, as we once solemnly made by others, so, for our peace, we must renew in ourselves. Thus the experienced mind, both knowing that it hath met with a good friend, and withal what the price of a friend is, cannot but be careful to retain him, and wary of displeasing; and therefore, to cut off all dangers of variance, voluntarily takes a double oath of allegiance of itself to God, which neither benefit shall induce us to break, if we might gain a world, nor fear urge us thereto, though we must lose ourselves.

The wavering heart, that finds continual combats in itself betwixt pleasure and conscience, so equally matched that neither gets the day, is not yet capable of peace; and, whether ever overcometh, is troubled both with resistance and victory. Barren Rebekah found more ease, than when her twins struggled in her womb. If Jacob had been there alone, she had not complained of that painful contention. One while, pleasure holds the fort, and conscience assaults it; which when it hath entered at last by some strong hand, after many batteries

[1] The intrepid speech of Luther before his appearance at the Diet of Worms, is well known. See Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. vol. iv. p. 58. London, 1782.—Ed.

of judgments denounced, ere long pleasure either corrupts the watch, or by some cunning stratagem, finds way to recover her first hold. So one part is ever attempting and ever resisting. Betwixt both the heart cannot have peace, because it resolves not: for while the soul is held in suspense, it cannot enjoy the pleasure it useth, because it is half taken up with fear. Only a strong and resolute repulse of pleasure is truly pleasant; for therein the conscience, filling us with heavenly delight, maketh sweet triumphs in itself, as being now the lord of his own dominions, and knowing what to trust to. No man knows the pleasure of this thought, "I have done well," but he that hath felt it; and he that hath felt it contemns all pleasure to it. It is a false slander raised on Christianity, that it maketh men dumpish and melancholic; for therefore are we heavy, because we are not enough Christians. We have religion enough to mislike pleasures, not enough to overcome them. But if we be once conquerors over ourselves, and have devoted ourselves wholly to God, there can be nothing but heavenly mirth in the soul. Lo, hear, ye philosophers, the true music of heaven, which the good heart continually heareth, and answers it in the just measures of joy. Others may talk of mirth, as a thing they have heard of, or vainly fancied: only the Christian feels it; and in comparison thereof, scorneth the idle, ribaldish, and scurrilous mirth of the profane.

SECTION XXIV.

2. *Rule for our Actions: to do nothing doubtingly.*

And this resolution which we call for, must not only exclude manifestly evil actions, but also doubting and suspension of mind in actions suspected and questionable, wherein the judgment must ever give confident determination one way. For this tranquillity consisteth in a steadiness of the mind; and how can that vessel, which is beaten upon by contrary waves and winds, and tottereth to either part, be said to keep a steady course? Resolution is the only mother of security.

For instance,[1] I see that usury, which was wont to be condemned for no better than a legal theft, hath now obtained with many the reputation of an honest trade; and is both used by many, and by some defended. It is pity that a bad practice should find any learned or religious patron. The sum of my patrimony lieth dead by me, sealed up in the bag of my father: my thriftier friends advise me to this easy and sure improvement. Their counsel and my gain prevail: my yearly sums come in with no cost but of time, wax, parchment: my

[1] "Usury, in the author's days, denoted any advantage whatever made by lending money. This was condemned by the canons of the church, probably in imitation of the Jewish law, by which all profit made by lending, except to strangers, was forbidden; (Deut. xxiii. 20.) Since a certain gain has been allowed by law, the word has grown into a bad sense, to denote unlawful gain, or that which exceeds the legal allowance. The prohibition to the Jews was peculiarly adapted, and we may therefore suppose intended, to preserve them a distinct people; but among us, where the borrower makes gain by the money he borrows, it seems most truly equitable that the lender should have a reasonable share in that gain."—Pratt.

estate likes it well; better than my conscience, which tells me still he doubts my trade is too easy to be honest. Yet I continue my illiberal course, not without some scruple and contradiction; so as my fear of offence hinders the joy of my profit, and the pleasure of my gain heartens me against the fear of injustice. I would be rich with ease; and yet I would not be uncharitable, I would not be unjust. All the while I live in unquiet doubts and distraction: others are not so much entangled in my bonds as I in my own. At last, that I may be both just and quiet, I conclude to refer this case wholly to the sentence of my inward judge, the conscience: the advocates, Gain and Justice, plead on either part at this bar, with doubtful success. Gain informs the judge of a new and nice distinction; of toothless and biting interest; and brings precedents of particular cases of usury, so far from any breach of charity or justice, that both parts therein confess themselves advantaged. Justice pleads even the most toothless usury to have sharp gums; and finds, in the most harmless and profitable practice of it, an insensible wrong to the common body, besides the infinite wrecks of private estates. The weak judge suspends, in such probable allegations, and demurreth; as being overcome of both, and of neither part; and leaves me no whit more quiet, no whit less uncertain. I suspend my practice accordingly; being sure it is good not to do what I am not sure is good to be done; and now Gain solicits me as much as Justice did before. Betwixt both, I live troublesomely, nor ever shall do other, till, in a resolute detestation, I have whipped this evil merchant out of the temple of my heart. This rigour is my peace: before, I could not be well,

either full of fasting: uncertainty is much pain, even in a more tolerable action.

Neither is it, I think, easy to determine, whether it be worse to do a lawful act with doubting, or an evil with resolution: since that which in itself is good is made evil to me by my doubt, and what is in nature evil is in this one point not evil to me, that I do it upon a verdict of a conscience: so now my judgment offends in not following the truth; I offend not in that I follow my judgment. Wherein, if the most wise God had left us to rove only according to the aim of our own conjectures, it should have been less faulty to be sceptics in our actions, and either not to judge at all, or to judge amiss; but now that he hath given us a perfect rule of eternal equity and truth, whereby to direct the sentences of our judgment, that uncertainty which alloweth no peace to us will afford us no excuse before the tribunal of heaven: wherefore, then only is the heart quiet, when our actions are grounded upon judgment, and our judgment upon truth.

SECTION XXV.

Rules for Estate: 1. *Reliance upon the providence of God.*

For his estate, the quiet mind must first roll itself upon the providence of the highest; for whoever so casts himself upon these outward things, that in their prosperous estate he rejoiceth, and contrarily, is cast down in their miscarriage, I know not whether he shall find more uncertainty of rest, or more certainty of unquietness; since he must

needs be like a light unballasted vessel, that rises and falls with every wave, and depends only on the mercy of wind and water. But who relies on the inevitable decree and all-seeing providence of God, which can neither be crossed with second thoughts nor with events unlooked for, lays a sure ground of tranquillity. Let the world toss how it list, and vary itself, as it ever doth, in storms and calms, his rest is pitched aloft, above the sphere of changeable mortality.

To begin is harder than to prosecute: what counsel had God, in the first moulding of thee in the womb of thy mother? What aid shall he have in repairing thee from the womb of the earth? And if he could make and shall restore thee, without thee, why shall he not much more, without thy endeavour, dispose of thee? Is God wise enough to guide the heavens, and to produce all creatures in their kinds and seasons; and shall he not be able to order thee alone?

Thou sayst, "I have friends; and (which is my best friend,) I have wealth to make both them and me, and wit to put both to best use." O the broken reeds of human confidence! Who ever trusted on friends, that could trust to himself? Who ever was so wise, as not sometimes to be a fool in his own conceit; ofttimes in the conceit of others? Who was ever more discontent than the wealthy? Friends may be false: wealth cannot but be deceitful: wit hath made many fools. Trust thou to that which, if thou wouldst, cannot fail thee.

Not that thou desirest shall come to pass, but that which God hath decreed. Neither thy fears, nor thy hopes, nor vows, shall either foreslow[1] or

[1] Impede.—Ed.

alter it. The inexperienced passenger, when he sees the vessel go amiss or too far, lays fast hold on the contrary part, or on the mast, for remedy: the pilot laughs at his folly; knowing that, whatever he labours, the bark will go which way the wind and his stern directeth it. Thy goods are embarked: now thou wishest a direct north wind, to drive thee to the straits; and then a west, to run in: and now, when thou hast emptied and laded again, thou callest as earnestly for the south and south-east, to return; and lowerest if all these answer thee not: as if heaven and earth had nothing else to do but to wait upon thy pleasure; and served only to be commanded service by thee. Another, that hath contrary occasion, asks for winds quite opposite to thine. He that sits in heaven neither fits thy fancy nor his; but bids his winds spit sometimes in thy face, sometimes to favour thee with a side blast, sometimes to be boisterous, otherwhile to be silent, at his own pleasure. Whether the mariner sing or curse, it shall go whither it is sent. Strive or lie still, thy destiny shall run on; and what must be shall be. Not that we should hence exclude benefit of means, which are always necessarily included in this wise preordination of all things, but perplexity of cares and wrestling with providence. Oh, the idle and ill-spent cares of curious men, that consult with stars and spirits for their destinies, under colour of prevention! If it be not thy destiny, why wouldst thou know it; what needst thou resist it? If it be thy destiny, why wouldst thou know that thou canst not prevent? That which God hath decreed is already done in heaven, and must be done on earth. This kind of expectation doth but hasten

slow evils, and prolong them in their continuance; hasten them, not in their event, but in our conceit. Shortly then, if thou swimmest against the stream of this providence, thou canst not escape drowning; every wave turns thee over like a porpoise before a tempest; but if thou swimmest with the stream, do but cast thine arms abroad, thou passest with safety and with ease; it both bears thee up and carries thee on to the haven, whither God hath determined thine arrival, in peace.

SECTION XXVI.

The second rule for Estate: a persuasion of the goodness and fitness of it for us.

NEXT to this, the mind of the unquiet man must be so wrought by these former resolutions, that it be thoroughly persuaded the estate wherein he is, is best of all; if not in itself, yet to him; not out of pride, but out of contentment; which whosoever wanteth, cannot but be continually vexed with envy, and racked with ambition. Yea, if it were possible to be in heaven without this, he could not be happy; for it is as impossible for the mind at once to long after and enjoy, as for a man to feed and sleep at once.

And this is the more to be striven for, because we are all naturally prone to afflict ourselves with our own frowardness; ungratefully contemning all we have, for what we would have. Even the best of the patriarchs could say, 'O Lord what wilt thou give me, since I go childless?'

The bondman desires now, nothing but liberty: that alone would make him happy. Once free, forgetting his former thought, he wishes some wealth to make use of his freedom; and says, "It were as good be straited in place as in ability." Once rich, he longeth after nobility; thinking it no praise to be a wealthy peasant. Once noble, he begins to deem it a base matter to be subject; nothing can now content him but a crown. Then, it is a small matter to rule, so long as he hath but little dominions, and greater neighbours: he would therefore be an universal monarch. Whither then? surely it vexeth him as much, that the earth is so small a globe, so little a molehill, and that there are no more worlds to conquer. And now that he hath attained the highest dignity amongst men, he would needs be a God, conceits his immortality, erects temples to his own name, commands his dead statues to be adored; and not thus contented, is angry that he cannot command heaven and control nature.

O vain fools! whither doth our restless ambition climb? What shall be at length the period of our wishes? I could not blame these desires, if contentment consisted in having much: but, now that he only hath much that hath contentment, and that it is as easily obtained in a low estate, I can account of these thoughts no better than proudly foolish.

Thou art poor: what difference is there betwixt a greater man and thee, save that he doth his businesses by others, thou doest them thyself? He hath caters, cooks, bailiffs, stewards, secretaries, and all other officers for his several services: thou providest, dressest, gatherest, receivest, expendest, writest for thyself. His patrimony is large; thine

earnings small. If Briareus feed fifty bellies with his hundred hands, what is he the better than he that with two hands feedeth one? He is served in silver; thou in a vessel of the same colour, of lesser price; as good for use, though not for value. His dishes are more dainty; thine as well relished to thee, and no less wholesome. He eats olives, thou garlic: he mislikes not more the smell of thy sauce, than thou dost the taste of his. Thou wantest somewhat that he hath: he wisheth something which thou hast, and regardest not. Thou couldst be content to have the rich man's purse; but his gout thou wouldst not have; he would have thy health, but not thy fare.

If we might pick out of all men's estates that which is laudable, omitting the inconveniences, we would make ourselves complete; but if we must take all together, we should perhaps little advantage ourselves with the change: for the most wise God hath so proportioned out every man's condition, that he hath some just cause of sorrow inseparably mixed with other contentments, and hath allotted to no man living an absolute happiness, without some grievances; nor to any man such an exquisite misery, as that he findeth not somewhat wherein to solace himself; the weight whereof varies, according to our estimation of them. One hath much wealth, but no child to inherit it: he envies at the poor man's fruitfulness, which hath many heirs and no lands; and could be content, with all his abundance to purchase a successor of his own loins. Another hath many children, little maintenance; he commendeth the careless quietness of the barren; and thinks fewer mouths and more meat would do better. The labouring man

hath the blessing of a strong body, fit to digest any fare, to endure any labour; yet he wisheth himself weaker, on condition he might be wealthier. The man of nice education hath a feeble stomach, and (rasping since his last meal,) doubts whether he should eat of his best dish, or nothing: this man repines at nothing more than to see his hungry ploughman feed on a crust; and wisheth to change estates, on condition he might change bodies with him.

Say, that God should give thee thy wish, what wouldst thou desire: "Let me," thou sayest, "be wise, healthful, rich, honourable, strong, learned, beautiful, immortal." I know thou lovest thyself so well, that thou canst wish all these and more.

But say, that God hath so shared out these gifts, by a most wise and just distribution, that thou canst have but some of these, perhaps but one; which wouldst thou single out for thyself? Any thing beside what thou hast: if learned, thou wouldst be strong; if strong, honourable; if honourable, long lived. Some of these thou art already.

Thou fool! cannot God choose better for thee, than thou for thyself? In other matches thou trustest the choice of a skilfuller chapman: when thou seest a goodly horse in the fair, though his shape please thine eye well, yet thou darest not buy him, if a cunning horse-master shall tell thee he is faulty; and art willing to take a plainer and sounder, on his commendation, against thy fancy. How much more should we, in this case, allow his choice that cannot deceive us, that cannot be deceived!

But thou knowest that other thou desirest to be better than what thou hast: better, perhaps, for

him that hath it; not better for thee. Liberty is sweet and profitable to those that can use it; but fetters are better for the frantic man. Wine is good nourishment for the healthful, poison to the aguish. It is good for a sound body to sleep in a whole skin; but he that complains of swelling sores cannot sleep till it be broken. Hemlock to the goat, and spiders to the monkey, turn to good sustenance; which, to other creatures, are accounted deadly. As in diets, so in estimation of good and evil, of greater and lesser good, there is much variety. All palates commend not one dish; and what one commends for most delicate, another rejects for unsavory. And if thou know what dish is most pleasant to thee, thy physician knows best which is wholesome. Thou wouldst follow thine appetite too much; and, as the French have in their proverb, wouldst dig thy own grave with thy teeth: thy wise Physician oversees and overrules thee. He sees, if thou wert more esteemed, thou wouldst be proud; if more strong, licentious; if richer, covetous; if healthfuller, more secure; but thou thinkest not thus hardly of thyself.

Fond man! what knowest thou future things? Believe thou him that only knows what would be, what will be. Thou wouldst willingly go to heaven: what better guide canst thou have than him that dwells there? If he lead thee through deep sloughs and braky thickets; know that he knows this the nearer way, though more cumbersome. Can there be in him any want of wisdom, not to foresee the best? Can there be any want of power, not to effect the best? any want of love, not to give thee what he knows is best? How canst thou then fail of the best, since what his power can do, and

what his wisdom sees should be done, his love hath done, because all are infinite? He willeth not things because they are good; but they are good because he wills them. Yea, if aught had been better, this had not been. God willeth what he doth; and if thy will accord not with his, whether wilt thou condemn of imperfection?

SECTION XXVII.

The conclusion of the whole.

I HAVE chalked out the way of peace: what remaineth, but that we walk along in it? I have conducted my reader to the mine, yea, to the mint of happiness, and showed him those glorious heaps which may eternally enrich him. If now he shall go away with his hands and skirt empty, how is he but worthy of a miserable want? Who shall pity us while we have no mercy on ourselves? Wilful distress hath neither remedy nor compassion.

And to speak freely, I have often wondered at this painful folly of us men, who, in the open view of our peace, as if we were condemned to a necessary and fatal unquietness, live upon our own rack; finding no more joy than if we were under no other hands but our executioners. One drooppeth under a feigned evil; another augments a small sorrow through impatience; another draws upon himself an uncertain evil through fear: one seeks true contentment, but not enough; another hath just cause of joy, and perceives it not: one is vexed, for that his grounds of joy are matched with equal

grievances; another cannot complain of any present occasion of sorrow, yet lives sullenly, because he finds not any present cause of comfort: one is haunted with his sin; another distracted with his passion; amongst all which he is a miracle of all men that lives not some way discontented. So we live not while we do live, only for that we want either wisdom or will to husband our lives to our own best advantage.

Oh, the inequality of our cares! Let riches or honour be in question, we sue to them, we seek for them with importunity, with servile ambition: our pains need no solicitor; yea, there is no way wrong that leads to this end: we abhor the patience to stay till they inquire for us. And if ever, as it rarely happens, our desert and worthiness wins us the favour of this proffer, we meet it with both hands; not daring, with our modest denials, to whet the instance and double the intreaties of so welcome suitors. Yet, lo, here the only true and precious riches, the highest advancement of the soul, peace and happiness, seeks for us, sues to us or acceptation: our answers are coy and overly,[1] such as we give to those clients that look to gain by our favours. If our want were through the scarcity of good, we might yet hope for pity to ease us; but now that it is through negligence, and that we perish with our hands in our bosom, we are rather worthy of stripes for the wrong we do ourselves, than of pity for what we suffer. That we may and will not, in opportunity of hurting others, is noble and Christian; but in our own benefit, sluggish, and savouring of the worst kind of unthriftiness.

[1] Haughty, supercilious.—Ed.

Sayest thou then, this peace is good to have, but hard to get? It were a shameful neglect, that hath no pretence. Is difficulty sufficient excuse to hinder thee from the pursuit of riches, of preferment, of learning, of bodily pleasures? Art thou content to sit shrugging in a base cottage, ragged, famished, because house, clothes, and food will neither be had without money, nor money without labour, nor labour without trouble and painfulness? Who is so merciful, as not to say that a whip is the best alms for so lazy and wilful need? Peace should not be good, if it were not hard. Go, and by this excuse shut thyself out of heaven at thy death, and live miserably till thy death; because the good of both worlds is hard to compass. There is nothing but misery on earth and hell below, that thou canst come to without labour; and if we can be content to cast away such immoderate and unseasonable pains upon these earthly trifles, as to wear our bodies with violence, and to encroach upon the night for time to get them, what madness shall it seem in us, not to afford a less labour to that which is infinitely better, and which only gives worth and goodness to the other?

Wherefore, if we have not vowed enmity with ourselves, if we be not in love with misery and vexation, if we be not obstinately careless of our own good, let us shake off this unthrifty, dangerous, and desperate negligence, and quicken these dull hearts to a lively and effectual search of what only can yield them sweet and abiding contentment; which once attained, how shall we insult over evils, and bid them do their worst! How shall we, under this calm and quiet day, laugh at the rough weather and unsteady motions of the world!

How shall heaven and earth smile upon us, and we on them; commanding the one, aspiring to the other! How pleasant shall our life be, while neither joys nor sorrows can distemper it with excess! yea, while the matter of joy that is within us turns all the most sad occurrences into pleasure, how dear and welcome shall our death be, that shall but lead us from one heaven to another, from peace to glory!

Go, now, ye vain and idle worldlings, and please yourselves in the large extent of your rich manors, or in the homage of those whom baseness of mind hath made slaves to your greatness, or in the price and fashions of your full wardrobe, or in the wanton varieties of your delicate gardens, or in your coffers full of red and white earth; or, if there be any other earthly thing more alluring, more precious, enjoy it, possess it, and let it possess you: let me have only my peace; and let me never want it till I envy you.

THE

CHRISTIAN

LAID FORTH IN HIS

WHOLE DISPOSITION AND CARRIAGE.

AN EXHORTATORY PREFACE

TO THE

CHRISTIAN READER.

Out of infallible rules and long experience, have I gathered up this true character of a Christian: a labour, some will think, which might have been well spared.

Every man professes both to know and act this part. Who is there that would not be angry, if but a question should be made either of his skill or interest? Surely, since the first name given at Antioch, all the believing world hath been ambitious of the honour of it: how happy were it, if all that are willing to wear the livery were as ready to do the service! But it falls out here, as in the case of all things that are at once honourable and difficult, every one affects the title, few labour for the truth of the achievement.

Having, therefore, leisure enough to look about me, and finding the world too prone to this worst kind of hypocrisy, I have made this true draught; not more for direction than for trial. Let no man view these lines as a stranger, but when he looks in this glass, let him ask his heart whether this be his own face; yea, rather, when he sees this face, let him examine his heart, whether both of them agree with their pattern; and where he finds his failings, (as who shall not?) let him strive to amend them, and never give over while he is any way less fair than his copy.

In the mean time, I would it were less easy by these rules, to judge even of others, besides ourselves; or that it were un-

charitable to say, there are many professors, few Christians. If words and forms might carry it, Christ would have clients enough; but if holiness of disposition, and uprightness of carriage must be the proof, woe is me! 'In the midst of the land, among the people, there is as the shaking of an olive-tree, and as the gleaning grapes, where the vintage is done.' Isaiah xxiv. 13.

For where is the man that hath obtained the mastery of his corrupt affections, and to be the lord of his unruly appetite; that hath his heart in heaven, while his living carcass is stirring here upon earth; that can see the invisible, and secretly enjoy that Saviour to whom he is spiritually united; that hath subdued his will and reason to his belief; that fears nothing but God, loves nothing but goodness, hates nothing but sin, rejoiceth in none but true blessings; whose faith triumphs over the world, whose hope is anchored in heaven, whose charity knows no less bounds than God and men; whose humility represents him as vile to himself as he is honourable in the reputation of God; who is wise heavenward, however he passes with the world; who dares be no other than just, whether he win or lose; who is frugally liberal, discreetly courageous, holily temperate; who is ever a thrifty manager of his hours, so dividing the day betwixt his God and his vocation, that neither shall find fault with a just neglect, or an unjust partiality; whose recreations are harmless, honest, warrantable, such as may refresh nature, not debauch it; whose diet is regulated by health, not by pleasure, as one whose table shall be no altar to his belly, nor snare to his soul; who, in his seasonable repose, lies down, and awakes with God, caring only to relieve his spirits, not to cherish sloth;—whose carriage is meek, gentle, compliant, beneficial in whatsoever station; in magistracy impartially just, in the ministry conscionably faithful, in the rule of his family wisely provident and religiously exemplary; shortly, who is a discreet and loving yoke-fellow, a tender and pious parent, a duteous and awful son,* a humble and obsequious servant, an obedient and loyal subject;—whose heart is

* A son full of reverence for his parents.—Ed.

constantly settled in the main truths of Christian religion, so as he cannot be removed; in litigious points, neither too credulous nor too peremptory; whose discourse is such as may be meet for the expressions of a tongue that belongs to a sound, godly, and charitable heart; whose breast continually burns with the heavenly fire of a holy devotion; whose painful sufferings are overcome with patience and cheerful resolutions; whose conflicts are attended with undaunted courage, and crowned with a happy victory; lastly, whose death is not so full of fear and anguish, as of strong consolations in that Saviour who hath overcome and sweetened it; nor of so much dreadfulness in itself, as of joy in the present expectation of that blessed issue of a glorious immortality which instantly succeeds it?—Such is the Christian whom we do here characterize, and commend to the world both for trial and imitation. Neither know I which of these many qualifications can be missing, in that soul who lays a just claim to Christ his Redeemer.

Take your hearts to task therefore, my dear brethren, into whose hands soever these lines shall come; and as you desire to have peace at the last, ransack them thoroughly; not contenting yourselves with a perfunctory and fashionable oversight,* which will one day leave you irremediably miserable, but so search, as those that resolve not to give over, till you find these gracious dispositions in your bosoms, which I have here described to you. So shall we be, and make each other happy in the success of our holy labours; which the God of Heaven bless in both our hands, to his own glory, and our mutual comfort in the day of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

* A slight external glance.—Ed.

THE CHRISTIAN.

SECTION I.

His Disposition.

THE Christian is a man, and more; an earthly saint; an angel clothed in flesh; the only lawful image of his Maker and Redeemer; the abstract of God's church on earth; a model of heaven, made up in clay; the living temple of the Holy Ghost.

For his disposition, it hath in it as much of heaven as his earth may make room for.

He were not a man, if he were quite free from corrupt affections; but these he masters, and keeps in with a strait hand: and if, at any time, they grow testy and headstrong, he breaks them with a severe discipline; and will rather punish himself than not tame them. He checks his appetite with discreet, but strong denials; and forbears to pamper nature, lest it grow wanton and impetuous. He walks on earth, but converses in heaven; having his eyes fixed on the invisible, and enjoying a sweet communion with his God and Saviour. While all the rest of the world sits in darkness,

he lives in a perpetual light: the heaven of heavens is open to none but him: thither his eye pierceth, and beholds those beams of inaccessible glory which shine in no face but his.

The deep mysteries of godliness, which to the great clerks of the world[1] are as a book clasped and sealed up, lie open before him, fair and legible; and while those book-men know whom they have heard of, he knows whom he hath believed.

He will not suffer his Saviour to be ever out of his eye; and if through some worldly interceptions he lose the sight of that blessed object for a time, he zealously retrieves him; not without a hungry check of his own miscarriage; and is now so much the more fixed by his former slackening, so as he will henceforth sooner part with his soul than his Redeemer. The terms of entireness, wherein he stands with the Lord of life, are such as he can feel, but cannot express, though he should borrow the language of angels; it is enough that they two are one spirit.

His reason is willingly captivated to his faith; his will to his reason, and his affections to both. He fears nothing that he sees, in comparison of that which he sees not; and displeasure is more dreadful to him than smart. Good is the adequate object of his love, which he duly proportions, according to the degrees of its eminence: affecting the chief good not without a certain ravishment of spirit; the lesser, with a wise and holy moderation.

Whether he do more hate sin or the evil spirit that suggests it, is a question.

[1] Men of great secular learning.—Ed.

Earthly contents are too mean grounds wherein to root his joy: those, as he talks not when they meet in his way, so he doth not too eagerly pursue: he may taste of them; but so, as he would rather fast, than surfeit.

He is not insensible to those losses which casualty or enmity may inflict; but that which lies most heavily upon his heart, is his sin. This makes his sleep short and troublesome, his meals stomachless, his recreations listless, his every thing tedious, till he find his soul acquitted by his great surety in heaven: which done, he feels more peace and pleasure in his calm, than he found horror in the tempest.

His heart is the storehouse of most precious graces. That faith, whereby his soul is established, triumphs over the world, whether it allure or threaten: and feels defiance to all the powers of darkness, not fearing to be foiled by any opposition. His hope cannot be discouraged with the greatest difficulties; but bears up against natural impossibilities, and knows how to reconcile contradictions. His charity is both extensive and fervent: barring out no one that bears the face of a man, but pouring out itself upon the household of faith; that studies good constructions of men and actions, and keeps itself free both from suspicion and censure.

Grace doth more exalt him, than his humility depresses him. Were it not for that Christ who dwells in him, he could think himself the meanest of all creatures: now, he knows he may not disparage the Deity of him, by whom he is so gloriously inhabited; in whose only right he can be as

great in his own thoughts as he is despicable in the eyes of the world.

He is wise to Godward, however it be with him for the world: and, well knowing he cannot serve two masters, he cleaves to the better; making choice of that good part which cannot be taken from him: not so much regarding to get that which he cannot keep, as to possess himself of that good which he cannot lose.

He is just in all his dealings with men, hating to thrive by injury and oppression; and will rather leave behind something of his own than filch from another's heap. He is not close-fisted where there is just occasion of his distribution, willingly parting with those metals which he regards only for use, not caring for either their colour or substance; earth is to him no other than itself, in what hue soever it appeareth.

In every good cause he is bold as a lion, and can neither fear faces nor shrink at dangers; and is rather heartened with opposition, pressing so much the more where he finds a large door open and many adversaries; and, when he must suffer, doth as resolutely stoop as he did before valiantly resist.

He is holily temperate in the use of all God's blessings, as knowing by whom they are given, and to what end; neither dares either to mislay them, or to misspend them lavishly; as duly weighing upon what terms he receives them, and fore-expecting an account. Such a hand doth he carry upon his pleasures and delights, that they run not away with him; he knows how to slacken the reins without a debauched kind of dissolute-

ness; and how to straiten them without a sullen rigour.

SECTION II.

His Expence of the Day.

He lives as a man that hath borrowed his time, and challenges not to be owner of it; caring to spend the day in a gracious and well governed thrift.

His first morning's task, after he hath lifted up his heart to that God who gives his beloved sleep, shall be to put himself in a due posture, wherein to entertain himself and the whole day: which shall be done, if he shall effectually work his thoughts to a right apprehension of his God, of himself, of all that may concern him.

The true posture of a Christian then is this. He sees still heaven open to him; and beholds and admires the light inaccessible: he sees the all-glorious God ever before him; the angels of God about him; the evil spirits aloof off, enviously groaning and repining at him; the world under his feet, willing to rebel, but forced to be subject; the good creatures ready to tender their service to him: and is accordingly affected to all these. He sees heaven open, with joy and desire of fruition: he sees God, with an adoring awfulness: he sees the angels, with a thankful acknowledgment, and care not to offend them: he sees the evil spirits, with hatred and watchful indignation: he sees the world, with a holy imperiousness; commanding it for use, and

scorning to stoop to it for observance: lastly, he sees the good creatures with gratulation, and care to improve them to the advantage of him that lent them.

Having thus gathered up his thoughts and found where he is, he may now be fit for his constant devotion; which he falls upon, not without a trembling veneration of that infinite and incomprehensible Majesty, before whom he is prostrate: now he climbs up into that heaven, which he before did but behold; and solemnly pours out his soul, in hearty thanksgivings and humble supplications, into the bosom of the Almighty: wherein his awe is so tempered with his faith, that, while he labours under the sense of his own vileness, he is raised up in the confidence of an infinite mercy. Now he renews his feeling interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, his blessed Redeemer; and labours to get, in every breath, new pledges of his gracious entireness; so seasoning his heart with these early thoughts of piety, as that they stick by him all the day after.

Having thus begun with his God and begged his blessing, he now finds time to address himself to the works of his calling.

To live without any vocation, to live in an unwarrantable vocation, not to labour in the vocation wherein he lives, are things which his soul hateth. These businesses of his calling therefore, he follows with a willing and contented industry; not as forced to it by the necessity of human laws, or as urged by the law of necessity out of the sense or fear of want, nor yet contrarily, out of an eager desire of enriching himself in his estate; but in a conscionable obedience to that God, who hath made man to labour as the sparks to fly upward, and

hath laid it upon him both as a punishment and charge, 'In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat thy bread.' In an humble alacrity he walks on in the way, wherein his God hath set him: yet not the while so intent upon his hands, as not to tend his heart; which he lifts up in frequent ejaculations to that God, to whom he desires to be approved in all his endeavours; ascribing all the thanks, both of his ability and success, to that omnipotent hand. If he meet with any rubs of difficulty in his way, he knows who sent them, and who can remove them: not neglecting any prudential means of remedy, he is not to seek for a higher redress.

If he have occasion of trading with others, his will may not be the rule of his gain, but his conscience: neither dares he strive for what he can get, but what he ought. Equity is here the clerk of the market; and the measure which he would have others mete out to himself, is the standard whereby he desires to be tried in his mensurations to all other. He hates to hoist prices upon occasion of his neighbour's need; and to take the advantage of forfeits by the clock.[1] He is not such a slave to his trade, as not to spare an hour to his soul: neither dares he be so lavish, as utterly to neglect his charge, upon whatever pretence of pleasure or devotion.

Shortly, he takes his work at the hand of God, and leaves it with him; humbly offering up his

[1] In venturing to mark these sentiments as singularly worthy of attention in the present day, the editor has in view, not only the permanent well-being of individuals, but the promotion of the real prosperity of his country.

services to his great Master in heaven; and, after all his labour, sits comfortably down in the conscience of having faithfully done his task, though not without the intervention of many infirmities.

SECTION III.

His Recreations.

His recreations (for even these human frailty will sometimes call for) are such as may be meet relaxations to a mind over-bent, and a body tired with honest and holy employments; safe, inoffensive, and for time and measure fitly proportioned to the occasion: like unto soft music betwixt two long and stirring acts; like unto some quick and savoury sauce, to a listless and cloyed stomach; like unto a sweet nap, after an overwatching.

He is far from those delights that may effeminate or corrupt the mind; abhorring to sit by those pleasures from which he shall not rise better.

He hates to turn pastime into trade; not abiding to spend more time in whetting, than till his edge be sharp. In the height of his delectations he knows to enjoy God; from whom as he fetches his allowance, so he craves and expects a gracious acceptation, even when he lets himself most loose. And if, at any time, he have gone beyond his measure, he chides himself for the excess; and is so much the more careful, ever after, to keep within compass.

He can only make a kind of use of those con-

tentments wherein light minds are transported: and can manage his disports without passion; and leave a loser without regret. A smile to him is as much as a loud laughter to the worldling: neither doth he entertain mirth as his ordinary attendant, but as his retainer, to wait upon his serious occasions: and, finally, so rejoiceth, as if he rejoiced not.

SECTION IV.

His Meals.

His meals are such as nature requires, and grace moderates; not pinching himself with a penurious niggardliness, nor pampering himself with a wanton excess. His plate is the least part of his care: so as his fare may be wholesome, he stands not upon delicacy.

He dares not put his hand to the dish till he have looked up to the owner; and hates to put one morsel into his mouth unblessed; and knows it his duty to give thanks for what he hath paid for; as well considering, that neither the meat that he eats, nor the hand and mouth that receives it, nor the stomach that digests it, nor the metal that buys it, is of his own making.

And now, having fed his belly, not his eye, he rises from his board satisfied, not glutted; and so bestirs himself upon his calling, as a man not more unwieldy by his repast but more cheerful, and as one that would be loth his stomach should be any hinderance to his brain or to his hand.

If he shall have occasion to entertain himself

and his friends more liberally, he dares not lose himself and his feast. He can be soberly merry, and wisely free: only in this he is willing not to be his own man, in that he gives himself for the time to his guests. His caterer is friendly thrift; and temperance keeps the board's end, and carves to every one the best measure of enough.

As for his own diet, when he is invited to a tempting variety, he puts his knife to his throat:[1] neither dares he feed without fear; as knowing who overlooks him.

Obscenity, detraction, scurrility, are barred from his table: neither do any words sound there that are less savoury than the dishes.

Lastly, he so feeds as if he sought for health in those viands, and not pleasure; as if he did eat to live; and rises, not more replenished with food than with thankfulness.

SECTION V.

His night's rest.

In a due season he betakes himself to his rest. He presumes not to alter the ordinance of day and night; nor dares confound, where distinction is made by his Maker.

It is not with him as with the brute creatures, that have nothing to look after but the mere obedience of nature. He doth not therefore lay himself down as the swine in the sty, or a dog in the kennel, without any further preface to his desired

[1] Prov. xxiii. 2.

sleep; but improves those faculties which he is now closing up to a meet preparation for a holy repose. For which purpose he first casts back his eye to the now-expired day, and seriously considers how he hath spent it; and will be sure to make his reckonings even with his God before he part. Then he lifts up his eyes and his heart to that God who hath made the night for man to rest in, and recommends himself earnestly to his blessed protection; and then closeth his eyes in peace, not without a serious meditation of his last rest. His bed represents to him his grave; his linen, his winding-sheet; his sleep, death; the night, the many days of darkness: and shortly, he so composeth his soul, as if he looked not to wake till the morning of the resurrection.

After which, if he sleep, he is thankfully cheerful; if he sleep not, his reins chasten and instruct him in the night season; and if sleep be out of his eyes, yet God and his angels are not: whensoever he awakes, in those hands he finds himself; and therefore rests sweetly, even when he sleeps not. His very dreams, however vain or troublesome, are not to him altogether unprofitable, for they serve to bewray, not only his bodily temper, but his spiritual weaknesses, which his waking resolutions shall endeavour to correct.

He so applies himself to his pillow, as a man that meant not to be drowned in sleep, but refreshed: not limiting his rest by the insatiable lust of a sluggish and drowsy stupidness; but by the exigence of his health, and habilitation[1] to his calling; and rises from it, not too late, with more

[1] Qualification.—Ed.

appetite to his work than to a second slumber; cheerfully devoting the strength renewed by his late rest, to the honour and service of the Giver.

SECTION VI.

His Carriage.

His carriage is not strange, insolent, surly, and overly contemptuous; but familiarly meek, humble, courteous: as knowing what mould he is made of; and not knowing any worse man than himself.

He hath a hand ready upon every occasion to be helpful to his neighbour; as if he thought himself made to do good. He hates to sell his breath to his friend, where his advice may be useful: neither is more ambitious of any thing under heaven, than of doing good offices.

It is his happiness if he can reconcile quarrels, and make peace between dissenting friends. When he is chosen an umpire, he will be sure to cut even betwixt both parties; and commonly displeaseth both that he may wrong neither.

If he be called forth to magistracy, he puts off all private interests, and commands friendship to give place to justice. Now he knows no cousins, no enemies; neither cousins for favour, nor enemies for revenge, but looks right forward to the cause without squinting aside to the persons. No flattery can keep him from browbeating of vice, no fear can work him to discourage virtue. Where severity is requisite he hates to enjoy another's punishment; and where mercy may be more prevalent he hates to use severity. Power doth not render him impe-

rious and oppressive; but rather humbles him in the awful expectation of his account.

If he be called to the honour of God's embassy to his people, he dares not but be faithful in delivering that sacred message. He cannot now either fear faces or respect persons. It is equally odious to him to hide and smother any of God's counsel, and to foist in any of his own; to suppress truth, and to adulterate it. He speaks not himself, but Christ; and labours not to tickle the ear, but to save souls. So doth he go before his flock, as one that means to feed them no less by his example than by his doctrine; and would condemn himself if he did not live the gospel as well as preach it. He is neither too austere in his retiredness, nor too cheap in his sociableness: but carries so even a hand, that his discreet affableness may be free from contempt, and that he may win his people with a loving conversation. If any of his charge be miscarried into an error of opinion, he labours to reclaim him by the spirit of meekness, so as the misguided may read nothing but love in his zealous conviction. If any be drawn into a vicious course of life, he fetches him back with a gentle but powerful hand: by a holy importunity working the offender to a sense of his own danger, and to a saving penitence.

Is he the master of a family? he dares not be a lion in his own house, cruelly tyrannizing over his meanest drudge; but so moderately exercises his power, as knowing himself to be his apprentice's fellow-servant. He is the mouth of his meiny[1] to God in his daily devotions; offering up for them

[1] Servants, retinue: it is the same as *many*.—Ed.

the calves of his lips[1] in his morning and evening sacrifice; and the mouth of God unto them in his wholesome instructions and all holy admonitions. He goes before them in good examples of piety and holy conversation; and so governs as one that hath more than mere bodies committed to his charge.

Is he the husband of a wife? he carries his yoke even: not laying too much weight upon the weaker neck. His helper argues him the principal; and he so knows it that he makes a wise use of his just inequality, so remembering himself to be the superior as that he can be no other than one flesh. He maintains therefore his moderate authority with a conjugal love: so holding up the right of his sex, that in the mean time he doth not violently clash with the brittler vessel. As his choice was not made by weight, or by the voice, or by the hue of the skin, but for the pure affection grounded upon virtue; so the same regards hold him close to a constant continuance of his chaste love; which can never yield either to change or intermission.

Is he a father of children? he looks upon them as more God's than his own, and governs them accordingly. He knows it is only their worse part which they have received from his loins; their diviner half is from the Father of lights, and is now become the main part of his charge. As God gave them to him, and to the world by him, so his chief care is that they may be begotten again to God; that they may put off that corrupt nature which they took from him, and be made partakers of that divine nature which is given them in their regeneration. For this cause he trains them up in all

[1] Hos. xiv.

virtuous and religious education: he sets them in their way, corrects their exorbitances, restrains their wild desires, and labours to frame them to all holy dispositions, and so bestows his fatherly care upon and for them, as one that would rather they should be good than rich, and would wish them rather dead than debauched. He neglects not all honest means of their provision, but the highest point he aims at is to leave God their patrimony. In the choice of their calling or match, he propounds but forces not, as knowing they have also wills of their own, which it is fitter for him to bow than to break.

Is he a son? he is such as may be fit to proceed from such loins.

Is he a servant? he cannot but be officious; for he must please two masters, though one under, not against the other: when his visible master sees him not, he knows he cannot be out of the eye of the Invisible, and therefore dares not be either negligent or unfaithful. The work that he undertakes he goes through, not out of fear, but out of conscience; and would do his business no otherwise than well, though he served a blind master. He is no blab of the defects at home, and where he cannot defend is ready to excuse. He yields patiently to a just reproof, and answers with an humble silence; and is more careful not to deserve than to avoid stripes.

Is he a subject? He is awfully affected to sovereignty, as knowing by whom the powers are ordained. He dares not curse the king; no, not in his thought; nor revile the ruler of his people, though justly faulty: much less dare he slander the footsteps of God's anointed. He submits, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake, to

every ordinance of God; yea, to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake: not daring to disobey in regard of the oath of God. If he have reached forth his hand to cut off but the skirt of the royal robe, his heart smites him. He is a true paymaster, and willingly renders tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, honour to whom honour is due; and justly divides his duties betwixt God and Cæsar.[1]

Finally, in whatever relation he stands, he is diligent, faithful, conscionable; observant of his rule, and careful to be approved such both to God and men.

SECTION VII.

His resolution in matter of Religion.

He hath fully informed himself of all the necessary points of RELIGION; and is so firmly grounded in those fundamental and saving truths, that he cannot be carried about with every wind of doctrine. As for collateral and unmaterial verities, he neither despiseth, nor yet doth too eagerly pursue them.

He lists not to take opinions upon trust: neither dares absolutely follow any guide, but those who he knows could not err.

He is ever suspicious of new faces of theological truths, and cannot think it safe to walk in untrodden paths.

[1] Eccles. x. 20; Exod. xxii. 28; Is. lxxxix. 51; 1 Pet. ii. 13; 1 Sam. xxiv. 5; Rom. xiii. 7; Matt. xxii. 21.

Matters of speculation are not unwelcome to him, but his chief care is to reduce his knowledge to practice; and therefore he holds nothing his own but what his heart hath appropriated, and his life acted.

He dares not be too much wedded to his own conceit; and *hath so much humility, as to think the whole church of Christ upon earth wiser than himself.* However he be a great lover of constancy, yet, upon better reason, he can change his mind in some litigious and unimporting truths, and can be silent where he must dissent.

SECTION VIII.

His Discourse.

His DISCOURSE is grave, discreet, pertinent; free from vanity, free from offence.

In secular occasions, nothing falls from him but seasonable and well-advised truths; in spiritual, his speech is such as both argues grace and works it.

No foul and unsavoury breath proceeds out of his lips, which he abides not to be tainted with any rotten communication, with any slanderous detraction. If in a friendly merriment he let his tongue loose to a harmless urbanity, that is the furthest he dares go; scorning to come within the verge of a base scurrility.

He is not apt to spend himself in censures; but as for revilings and cursed speakings against God or men, those his soul abhorreth.

He knows to reserve his thoughts, by locking them up in his bosom under a safe silence; and when he must speak, dares not be too free of his tongue, as well knowing that 'in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.'

His speeches are no other than seasonable, and well fitted both to the person and occasion. Jiggs at a funeral, lamentations at a feast, holy counsel to scorners, discouragements to the dejected, and applauses to the profane, are hateful to him.

He meddles not with other men's matters, much less with affairs of state; but keeps himself wisely within his own compass, not thinking his breath well spent where he doth not either teach or learn.

SECTION IX.

His Devotion.

He is so perpetually resident in heaven, that he is often in every day before the throne of grace; and he never comes there without supplication in his hand, wherein also he loves to be importunate; and he speeds accordingly, for he never departs empty; while other cold suitors, that come thither but in some good fits of DEVOTION, obtain nothing but denials.

He dares not press to God's footstool in his own name; he is conscious enough of his own unworthiness; but he comes in the gracious and powerful name of his righteous Mediator, in whom he knows he cannot but be accepted, and in an humble boldness, for his only sake craves mercy.

No man is either more awful[1] or more confident. When he hath put up his petition to the King of heaven, he presumes not to stint the time or manner of God's condescent;[2] but patiently and faithfully waits for the good hour, and leaves himself upon that infinite wisdom and goodness.

He doth not affect length so much as fervor; neither so much minds his tongue as his heart.

His prayers are suited according to the degrees of the benefits sued for. He therefore begs grace absolutely, and temporal blessings with limitation, and is accordingly affected in the grant.

Neither is he more earnest in craving mercies, than he is zealously desirous to be retributory to God when he hath received them; not more heartily suing to be rich in grace, than to improve his graces to the honour and advantage of the bestower.

With an awful and broken heart doth he make his addresses to that infinite Majesty, from whose presence he returns with comfort and joy.

His soul is constantly fixed there, whither he pours it out. Detraction and distrust are shut out from his closet; and he is so taken up with his devotion, as one that makes it his work to pray. And when he hath offered up his sacrifices unto God, his faith listens, and looks in at the door of heaven to know how they are taken.

[1] Under the influence of awe.—Ed. [2] Acquiescence.—Ed

SECTION X.

His Sufferings.

EVERY man shews fair in prosperity, but the main trial of the Christian is in SUFFERING; any man may steer in a good gale and clear sea, but the mariner's skill will be seen in a tempest.

Herein the Christian goes beyond the Pagan's, not practice only, but admiration. 'We rejoice in tribulation,' saith the chosen vessel. Lo! here a point transcending all the affectation of heathenism. Perhaps some resolute spirit, whether out of a natural fortitude, or out of an ambition of fame or earthly glory, may set a face upon a patient enduring of loss or pain; but never any of these heroic Gentiles durst pretend to a joy in suffering. Hither can Christian courage reach: knowing that 'tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.'

Is he bereaved of his goods and worldly estate? he comforts himself in the conscience of a better treasure, that can never be lost. Is he afflicted with sickness? his comfort is, that the inward man is so much more renewed daily, as the outward perisheth. Is he slandered and unjustly disgraced? his comfort is, that there is a blessing which will more than make him amends. Is he banished? he knows he is on his way homeward. Is he imprisoned? his spirit cannot be locked in: God and his angels cannot be locked out. Is he dying? to him 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' Is he

dead? he 'rests from his labours,' and is crowned with glory. Shortly, he is perfect gold, that comes more pure out of the fire than it went in; neither had ever been so great a saint in heaven, if he had not passed through the flames of his trial here upon earth.

SECTION XI.

His Conflicts.

He knows himself never out of danger, and therefore stands ever upon his guard. Neither of his hands is empty: the one holds out 'the shield of faith;' the other manageth 'the sword of the spirit:' both of them are employed in his perpetual CONFLICT.

He cannot be weary of resisting, but resolves to die fighting. He hath a ward for every blow; and as his eye is quick to discern temptations, so is his hand and foot nimble to avoid them.

He cannot be discouraged with either the number or power of his enemies; knowing that his strength is out of himself, in him in whom he can do all things, and that there can be no match to the Almighty.

He is careful not to give advantage to his vigilant adversary, and therefore warily avoids the occasions of sin: and if, at any time, he be overtaken with the suddenness or subtilty of temptation, he speedily recovers himself by a serious repentance, and fights so much the harder because of his foil.

He hates to take quarter of the spiritual powers: nothing less than death can put an end to his quarrel, nor nothing below victory.

SECTION XII.

His Death.

He is not so careful to keep his soul within his teeth, as to send it forth well addressed for happiness; as knowing, therefore, the last brant to be most violent, he rouseth up his holy fortitude to encounter that king of fear, his last enemy, DEATH.

And now, after a painful sickness and a resolute expectation of the fiercest assault, it falls out with him as in the meeting of the two hostile brothers, Jacob and Esau; instead of grappling, he finds a courteous salutation; for stabs, kisses; for height of enmity, offices of love. Life could never befriend him, so much as death offers to do: that tenders him (perhaps a rough, but) a sure hand, to lead him to glory, and receives a welcome accordingly.

Neither is there any cause to marvel at the change. The Lord of life hath wrought it; he, having by dying subdued death, hath reconciled it to his own; and hath, as it were, beaten it into these fair terms with all the members of his mystical body; so as while unto the enemies of God death is still no other than a terrible executioner of divine vengeance, he is to all that are in Christ a plausible and sure convoy unto blessedness.

The Christian, therefore, now laid upon his last bed, when this grim messenger comes to fetch him to heaven, looks not so much at his dreadful visage

as at his happy errand; and is willing not to remember what death is in itself, but what it is to us in Christ; by whom it is made so useful and beneficial, that we could not be happy without it.

Here, then, comes in the last act and employment of faith (for after this brunt passed, there is no more use of faith but of vision) that heartens the soul in a lively apprehension of that blessed Saviour, who both led him the way of suffering, and is making way for him to everlasting glory; that shews him 'Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God;' that clings close unto him, and lays unremoveable hold upon his person, his merits, his blessedness. Upon the wings of this faith, is the soul ready to mount up toward that heaven which is open to receive it; and, in that act of evolation, puts itself into the hands of those blessed angels, who are ready to carry it up to the throne of glory.[1]

SIC, O SIC JUVAT VIVERE, SIC PERIRE!

[1] The reader can hardly have refrained from exclaiming, more than once, while perusing this brief but most expressive treatise, were the picture here drawn but moderately realized in every one of those whose profession binds them to the imitation of such a model, not only would the world be free from the greatest portion of those evils which now afflict it, but human laws might be dispensed with as superfluous.—ED.

THE

DEVOUT SOUL;

OR,

RULES OF HEAVENLY DEVOTION.

TO ALL CHRISTIAN READERS

GRACE AND PEACE.

That in a time when we hear no noise but of drums and trumpets, and talk of nothing but arms and sieges and battles, I should write of devotion, may seem to some of you strange and unseasonable: to me contrarily, it seems most fit and opportune: for, when can it be more proper to direct our address to the throne of grace, than when we are in the very jaws of death? or when should we go to seek the face of our God, rather than in the needful time of trouble?

Blessed be my God, who in the midst of these woeful tumults hath vouchsafed to give me these calm and holy thoughts, which I justly suppose he meant not to suggest that they should be smothered in the breast wherein they were conceived, but with a purpose to have the benefit communicated unto many.

Who is there that needs not vehement excitations and helps to devotion? and when more than now? In a tempest the mariners themselves do not only cry every man to his God, but awaken Jonah, that is fast asleep under the hatches, and chide him to his prayers.

Surely, had we not been failing in our devotions, we could not have been thus universally miserable. That duty, the neglect whereof is guilty of our calamity, must, in the effectual performance of it, be the means of our recovery. Be but devout, and we cannot miscarry under judgments. Woe is me! the tears of penitence were more fit to quench the public flame than blood. How soon would it clear up abovehead, if we were but holily affected within! Could we send our zealous ambassadors up to

heaven, we could not fail of a happy peace. I direct the way: God bring us to the end.

For my own particular practice, God is witness to my soul, that as one the sense of whose private affliction is swallowed up of the public, I cease not daily to ply the Father of Mercies with my fervent prayers, that he would at last be pleased, after so many streams of blood, to pass an act of pacification in heaven.

And what good heart can do otherwise? Brethren, all ye that love God, and his church, and his truth, and his anointed, and your country, and yourselves, and yours, join your forces with mine; and let us, by a holy violence, make way to the gates of heaven with our petition for mercy and peace; and not suffer ourselves to be beaten off from the threshold of grace till we be answered with a condescent. He, whose goodness is wont to prevent our desires, will not give denials to our importunities.

Pray and farewell.

Norwich, March 10, 1643.

THE DEVOUT SOUL.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT DEVOTION IS: — HABITUAL, THAT GOES THROUGH THE HEART AND LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN; — ACTUAL, OR A SPECIAL AND FIXED EXERCISE OF DEVOTION.

DEVOTION is the life of religion; the very soul of piety; the highest employment of grace; and no other than the prepossession of heaven by the saints of God here upon earth: every improvement whereof is of more advantage and value to the Christian soul, than all the profit and contentment which this world can afford it.

There is a kind of art of devotion, if we can attain unto it, whereby the practice thereof may be much advanced. We have known, indeed, some holy souls, which, out of the general precepts of piety, and their own happy experiments of God's mercy, have, through the grace of God, grown to a great measure of perfection this way; which yet might have been much expedited and completed,

by those helps which the greater illumination and experience of others might have afforded them. Like as we see it in other faculties; there are those, who out of a natural dexterity, and their own frequent practice, have got into a safe posture of defence, and have handled their weapon with commendable skill, whom yet the fence-school might have raised to a higher pitch of cunning. As nature is perfected, so grace is not a little furthered by art; since it pleaseth the wisdom of God to work ordinarily upon the soul, not by the immediate power of miracle, but in such methods, and by such means, as may most conduce to his blessed ends. It is true, that all our good motions come from the Spirit of God; neither is it less true, that all the good counsels of others proceed from the same Spirit: and that good Spirit cannot be cross to itself; he, therefore, that infuses good thoughts into us, suggests also such directions as may render us apt both to receive and improve them. If God be bounteous, we may not be idle, and neglective of our spiritual aids.

If you tell me, by way of instance in a particular act of devotion, that there is a gift of prayer, and that the Spirit of God is not tied to rules; I yield both these: but, withal, I must say there are also helps of prayer, and that we must not expect immediate inspirations. I find the world much mistaken in both. They think that man hath the gift of prayer, that can utter the thoughts of his heart roundly unto God, that can express himself smoothly in the phrase of the Holy Ghost, and press God with most proper words and passionate vehemence; and, surely, this is a commendable faculty wheresoever it is: but this is not the gift of prayer; you

may call it, if you will, the gift of elocution. Do we say that man hath the gift of pleading, that can talk eloquently at the bar; that can, in good terms, loud and earnestly importune the judge for his client? and not rather he that brings the strongest reason, and quotes his books and precedents with most truth and clearest evidence, so as may convince the jury and persuade the judge? Do we say he hath the gift of preaching, that can deliver himself in a flowing manner of speech to his hearers; that can cite Scriptures or fathers; that can please his auditory with the flowers of rhetoric? or, rather, he that can divide the Word aright, interpret it soundly, apply it judiciously, put it home to the conscience; speaking in the evidence of the Spirit, powerfully convincing the gainsayers, comforting the dejected, and drawing every soul nearer to heaven? The like must we say for prayer; the gift whereof he may be truly said to have, not that hath the most nimible[1] tongue; (for prayer is not so much a matter of the lips as of the heart;) but he that hath the most illuminated apprehension of the God to whom he speaks; the deepest sense of his own wants; the most eager longings after grace; the feventest desires of supplies from heaven; and, in a word, whose heart sends up the strongest groans and cries to the Father of mercies.

Neither may we look for enthusiasms,[2] and im-

[1] Fluent.—Ed.

[2] Supernatural influences. Either the word had not yet sunk to that corrupt modern acceptation, which an eloquent contemporary, the author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm" adopts and defends, or Hall was too correct a writer to countenance the incipient debasement.—Ed.

mediate inspirations; putting ourselves upon God's Spirit, in the solemn exercises of our invocation, without heed or meditation; the dangerous inconvenience whereof hath been too often found, in the rash and unwarrantable expressions that have fallen from the mouths of unwary suppliants; but we must address ourselves, with due preparation, to that holy work; we must digest our suits, and fore-order our supplications to the Almighty, so that there may be excellent and necessary use of meet rules of our devotion.

He, whose Spirit helps us to pray, and whose lips taught us how to pray, is an all-sufficient example for us. All the skill of men and angels cannot afford a more exquisite model of supplicatory devotion, than that blessed Saviour of ours gave us in the Mount; led in by a divine and heart-raising preface, carried out with a strong and heavenly enforcement; wherein an awful compellation makes way for petition, and petition makes way for thanksgiving; the petitions marshalled in a most exact order; for spiritual blessings, which have an immediate concernment of God, in the first place; then, for temporal favours, which concern ourselves, in the second. So punctual a method had not been observed by Him that heareth prayers, if it had been all one to him, to have had our devotions confused and tumultuary.

There is commonly much mistaking of devotion; as if it were nothing but an act of vocal prayer, expiring with that holy breath, and revived with the next task of our invocation; which is usually measured of many by frequence, length, smoothness of expression, loudness, vehemence. Whereas, indeed, it is rather an habitual disposition of a holy

soul, sweetly conversing with God, in all the forms of a heavenly, yet awful familiarity; and a constant entertainment of ourselves here below, with the God of Spirits, in our sanctified thoughts and affections; one of the noble exercises whereof is our access to the Throne of Grace in our prayers; whereto may be added, the ordering of our holy attendance upon the blessed word and sacraments of the Almighty. Nothing hinders, therefore, but that a stammering suppliant may reach to a more eminent devotion, than he that can deliver himself in the most fluent and pathetical forms of elocution; and that our silence may be more devout than our noise.

We shall not need to send you to the cells or cloisters for this skill; although it will hardly be believed, how far some of their contemplative men have gone in the theory hereof; perhaps, like as chymists give rules for the attaining of that elixir which they never found; for, sure, they must needs fail of that perfection they pretend, who are commonly in the object of it, always in the ground of it, which is faith, stripped, by their opinion, of the comfortablest use of it, certainly of application.

As there may be many resemblances betwixt light and devotion, so this one especially; that, as there is a light universally diffused through the air, and there is a particular recollection of light into the body of the sun and stars; so it is in devotion: there is a general kind of devotion, that goes through the renewed heart and life of a Christian, which we may term *habitual* and *virtual*; and there is a special and fixed exercise of devotion, which we name *actual*.

CHAPTER II.

REQUISITES TO THE EFFECTUAL PERFORMANCE OF DEVOTION.

THE soul that is rightly affected to God is never void of a holy devotion. Wherever it is, whatever it doth, it is still lifted up to God; and fastened upon him, and converses with him; ever serving the Lord in fear, and rejoicing in him with trembling.

SECT. 1.—*The heart must be settled in a right apprehension of God.*

FOR the effectual performance whereof, it is REQUISITE first, that *the heart be settled in a right apprehension of our God:* without which, our devotion is not thankless only, but sinful.

With much labour therefore, and agitation of a mind illuminated from above, we must find ourselves wrought to a high, awful, adorative, and constant conceit of that incomprehensible Majesty, in whom we live, and move, and are: One God, in Three most glorious Persons; infinite in wisdom, in power, in justice, in mercy, in providence, in all that he is, in all that he hath, in all that he doth; dwelling in light inaccessible; attended with thousand thousands of angels; whom yet we neither can know, neither would it avail us if we could, but in the face of the Eternal Son of his Love, our

blessed Mediator, God and Man; who sits at the right-hand of Majesty in the highest heavens; from the sight of whose glorious humanity we comfortably rise to the contemplation of that infinite Deity, whereto it is inseparably united; in and by him made ours by a lively faith, finding our persons and obedience accepted, expecting our full redemption and blessedness. Here, here must our hearts be unremoveably fixed. In his light must we see light. No cloudy occurrences of this world, no busy employments, no painful sufferings, must hinder us from thus seeing him that is invisible.

Sect. 2.—*The Heart must behold God as really present.*

Neither doth the devout heart see his God aloof off, as dwelling above in the circle of heaven, but beholds that infinite Spirit really present with him.

'The Lord is upon thy right hand;' saith the psalmist. Our bodily eye doth not more certainly see our own flesh, than the spiritual eye sees God close by us; yea in us. A man's own soul is not so intimate to himself, as God is to his soul; neither do we move by him only, but in him.

What a sweet conversation, therefore, hath the holy soul with his God! What heavenly conferences have they two which the world is not privy to: while God entertains the soul with the divine motions of his Spirit, the soul entertains God with gracious compliances!

Is the heart heavy with the grievous pressures of

affliction? the soul goes in to his God, and pours out itself before him, in earnest bemoanings and supplications; the God of mercy answers the soul again, with seasonable refreshings of comfort. Is the heart secretly wounded and bleeding with the conscience of some sin? it speedily betakes itself to the great Physician of the soul, who forthwith applies the balm of Gilead for an unfailing and present cure. Is the heart distracted with doubts? the soul retires to that inward oracle of God for counsel: he returns to the soul a happy settlement of just resolution. Is the heart deeply affected with the sense of some special favour from his God? the soul breaks forth into the passionate voice of praise and thanksgiving: God returns the pleasing testimony of a cheerful acceptation.

O blessed soul that hath a God to go unto upon all occasions! O infinite mercy of a God, that vouchsafes to stoop to such entireness with dust and ashes! It was a gracious speech of a worthy divine,[1] upon his death-bed, now breathing towards heaven, That he should change his place, not his company. His conversation was now, beforehand, with his God and his holy angels: the only difference was, that he was now going to a more free and full fruition of the Lord of Life, in that region of glory above, whom he had truly, though with weakness and imperfection, enjoyed in this vale of tears.

[1] Dr. Preston.

CHAPTER III.

OF HABITUAL DEVOTION.

Now, that these mutual respects may be sure not to cool with intermission, the devout heart TAKES ALL OCCASIONS BOTH TO THINK OF GOD, AND TO SPEAK TO HIM.

SECT. 1.—*The heart takes all occasions to think of God.*

THERE is nothing that he sees, which doth not *bring God to his thoughts.*

Indeed, there is no creature wherein there are not manifest footsteps of omnipotence; yea, which hath not a tongue to tell us of its Maker. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work: one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another.' 'Yea, O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches: so is the great and wide sea, where are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.'[1] Every herb, flower, spire of grass, every twig and leaf, every worm and fly, every scale and feather, every billow and meteor, speaks the power and wisdom of their Infinite Creator. Solomon

[1] Psalm xix. 1, 2; civ. 24, 25.

sends the sluggard to the ant; Isaiah sends the Jews to the ox and the ass; our Saviour sends his disciples to the ravens, and to the lilies of the field: there is no creature of whom we may not learn something. We shall have spent our time ill in this great school of the world, if in such store of lessons, we be non-proficients in devotion.

Vain idolaters make to themselves images of God, whereby they sinfully represent him to their thoughts and adoration. Could they have the wit and grace to see it, God hath taken order to spare them this labour; in that he hath stamped in every creature such impressions of his infinite power, wisdom, goodness, as may give us just occasion to worship and praise him with a safe and holy advantage to our souls: 'For the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.'[1]

And indeed wherefore serve all the volumes of natural history, but to be so many commentaries upon the several creatures, wherein we may read God? and even those men who have not the skill or leisure to peruse them, may yet, out of their own thoughts and observation, raise from the sight of all the works of God, sufficient matter to glorify him.[2] Who can be so stupid as not to take notice of the industry of the bee, the providence of the

[1] Rom. i. 20.

[2] The learned Bishop says accurately, 'We may read God,'—i. e. meet with delightful illustrations of his power, wisdom, and goodness, admonishing us of our devotional duties. But we reason in a circle, when we attempt to form to ourselves the idea of God by inference from his works; for were we not already possessed of that idea, we should never think of instituting such a process of reasoning.—ED.

ant, the cunning of the spider, the reviving of the fly, the worm's endeavour of revenge, the subtlety of the fox, the sagacity of the hedgehog, the innocence and profitableness of the sheep, the laboriousness of the ox, the obsequiousness of the dog, the timorous shifts of the hare, the nimbleness of the deer, the generosity of the lion, the courage of the horse, the fierceness of the tiger, the cheerful music of birds, the harmlessness of the dove, the true love of the turtle, the cock's observation of time, the swallow's architecture? shortly, (for it were easy here to be endless,) of the several qualities and dispositions of every of those our fellow-creatures, with whom we converse on the face of the earth; and who that takes notice of them, cannot fetch from every act and motion of theirs, some monition of duty and occasion of devout thoughts?

Surely, I fear many of us Christians may justly accuse ourselves as too neglective of our duty this way; that having thus long spent our time in this great academy of the world, we have not, by so many silent documents, learned to ascribe more glory to our Creator. I doubt those creatures, if they could exchange their brutality with our reason, being now so docible as to learn of us so far as their sense can reach, would approve themselves better scholars to us, than we have been unto them.

Withal, I must add, that the devout soul stands not always in need of such outward monitors; but finds, within itself, sufficient incitements to raise up itself to a continual minding of God, and makes use of them accordingly; and if at any time, being taken up with the importunate occasions of the world, it finds God missing but an hour, it chides itself with such neglect; and sets itself to recover

him, with so much more eager affection: as the faithful spouse in the Canticles, when she finds him whom her soul loved, withdrawn from her for a season, puts herself into a speedy search after him, and gives not over till she have attained his presence.[1]

Sect. 2.—*The heart speaks to God.*

Now, as these many monitors, both outward and inward, must elevate our hearts very frequently to God; so those raised hearts must not entertain him with a dumb contemplation, but must *speak to him in the language of spirits.*

All occasions therefore must be taken, of sending forth pious and heavenly ejaculations to God. The devout soul may do this more than a hundred times a day, without any hinderance to his special vocation. The housewife at her wheel, the weaver at his loom, the husbandman at his plough, the artificer in his shop, the traveller in his way, the merchant in his warehouse, may thus enjoy God in his busiest employment; for the soul of man is a nimble spirit, and the language of thoughts need not take up time; and though we now, for example's sake, clothe them in words, yet in our practice we need not.

Now these ejaculations may be either at large or occasional.

(1.) *At large:* such as that of old Jacob; 'O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation:' or that of David; 'Oh, save me, for thy mercy's sake.'

[1] Cant. v. 6.

And these, either in matter of humiliation, or of imploration, or of thanksgiving. In all which, we cannot follow a better pattern than the sweet singer of Israel; whose heavenly conceptions we may either borrow or imitate.

In way of *humiliation*, such as these: 'Heal my soul, O Lord, for I have sinned against thee.' 'Oh, remember not my old sins, but have mercy upon me.' 'If thou wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?' 'Lord, thou knowest the thoughts of man, that they are but vain.' 'O God, why abhorrest thou my soul, and hidest thy face from me?'[1]

In the way of *imploration;* 'Up, Lord, and help me, O God.' 'Oh, let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.' 'Lord, where are thy old loving mercies?' 'Oh, deliver me, for I am helpless, and my heart is wounded within me.' 'Comfort the soul of thy servant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.' 'Go not far from me, O God.' 'Oh, knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy name.' 'Thou art my helper and redeemer, O Lord, make no long tarrying.' 'Oh, be thou my help in trouble, for vain is the help of man.' 'Oh, guide me with thy counsel, and after that, receive me to thy glory.' 'My time is in thy hand: deliver me from the hands of mine enemies.' 'Oh, withdraw not thy mercy from me, O Lord.' 'Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies.' 'Oh, let my soul live, and it shall praise thee.'[2]

[1] Psalms xli. 4; lxxix. 8; cxxx. 3; xciv. 11; lxxxviii. 14.
[2] Psalms iii. 7; cxix. 80; lxxxix. 49; cix. 21, 22; lxxxvi. 4; lxxi. 12; lxxxvi. 11; lxx. 5; lx. 11; lxxiii. 24; xxxi. 15; xl. 11; v. 8; cxix. 175.

In way of *thanksgiving:* 'O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places!' 'O Lord, how glorious are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.' 'O God, who is like unto thee?' 'The Lord liveth; and blessed be my strong helper.' 'Lord, thy loving-kindness is better than life itself.' 'All thy works praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints give thanks unto thee.' 'Oh, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.' 'Who is God, but the Lord; and who hath any strength, except our God?' 'We will rejoice in thy salvation, and triumph in thy name, O Lord.' 'Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!' 'Oh, how plentiful is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!' 'Thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.' 'In thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.' 'Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?' 'Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the praise.'[1]

(2.) *Occasional* ejaculations are such as are moved upon the presence of some such object as carries a kind of relation or analogy to that holy thought which we have entertained.

Of this nature I find that which was practised in St. Basil's time, that, upon the lighting of candles, the manner was to bless God in these words, "Praise be to God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" which that father says was anciently used, but who was the author of it he professeth to be unknown. To the same purpose was

[1] Psalm, lxviii. 35; cxii. 5; lxxi. 19; xviii. 46; lxiii. 3; cxlv. 10; civ. 24; xviii. 31; xx. 5; cvii. 8; xxxi. 19; ix. 10; xvi. 11; viii. 4; cxv. 1.

the Lucernarium, which was a part of the evening office of old. For which there may seem to be more colour of reason than for the ordinary fashion of apprecation[1] upon occasion of our sneezing, which is expected and practised by many out of civility. Old and reverend Beza was wont to move his hat with the rest of the company, but to say withal, "Gramercy, Madame la Superstition."

Now, howsoever, in this or any other practice which may seem to carry with it a smack of superstition, our devotion may be groundless and unseasonable, yet nothing hinders but that we may take just and holy hints of raising up our hearts to our God. As when we do first look forth, and see the heavens over our heads, to think, 'The heavens declare thy glory, O God;' when we see the day breaking or the sun rising, 'The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun;' when the light shines in our faces, 'Thou deckest thyself with light, as with a garment,' or, 'Light is sprung up for the righteous;' when we see our garden embellished with flowers, 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord;' when we see a rough sea, 'The waves of the sea rage horribly, and are mighty; but the Lord, that dwelleth on high, is mightier than they;' when we see the darkness of the night, 'The darkness is no darkness unto thee;' when we rise up from our bed or our seat, 'Lord, thou knowest my down-sitting and my up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off;' when we wash our hands, 'Wash thou me, O Lord, and I shall be whiter than snow;' when we are walking forth, 'Oh, hold thou up my goings in

[1] Praying for, or wishing well to any body.—Ed.

thy paths, that my footsteps slip not;' when we hear a passing bell, 'Oh, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart to wisdom,' or, 'Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days.'[1]

Thus may we dart out our holy desires to God, upon all occasions. Wherein heed must be taken that our ejaculations be not, on the one side, so rare that our hearts grow to be hard and strange to God, but that they may be held on in continual acknowledgment of him, and acquaintance with him: and, on the other side, that they be not so over-frequent in their perpetual reiteration, as that they grow to be, like that of the Romish votaries, fashionable;[2] which, if great care be not taken, will fall out to the utter frustrating of our devotion. Shortly, let the measure of these devout glances be the preserving our hearts in a constant tenderness and godly disposition; which shall be further actuated upon all opportunities, by the exercises of our more enlarged and fixed devotion; whereof there is the same variety that there is in God's services, about which it is conversant.

[1] Psalm, xix. 1; lxxiv. 16; civ. 2; xcvii. 11; xxxiii. 5; xciii. 4; cxxxix. 12; cxxxix. 1, 2; li. 7; xvii. 5; xc. 12; xxxix. 4.

[2] Matters of form, or custom.—Ed.

CHAPTER IV.

OF ACTUAL DEVOTION.

THERE are three main businesses, wherein God accounts his services here below to consist. The first is, our address to the throne of grace, and the pouring out of our souls before him in our prayers; the second is, the reading and hearing his most holy word; the third is, the receipt of his blessed sacraments: in all which there is place and use for a SETTLED DEVOTION.

SECT. 1.—*Of our Address to the Throne of Grace in Prayer.*

To begin with the *first work* of our actual and enlarged devotion.

(1.) Some things are pre-required of us, to make us capable of the comfortable performance of so holy and heavenly a duty; namely, that the heart be *clean* first, and then that it be *clear;* clean from the defilement of any known sin, clear from all entanglements and distractions.

What do we in our prayers, but converse with the Almighty; and either carry our souls up to him, or bring him down to us. Now, it is useless to hope that we can entertain God in an impure heart. Even we men loath a foul and sluttish

lodging: how much more will the holy God abhor a habitation spiritually filthy! I find that even the 'unclean spirit' made that a motive of his repossession, that he found 'the house swept and garnished.'[1] Satan's cleanliness is pollution, and his garnishment disorder and wickedness; without this, he finds no welcome. Each spirit looks for an entertainment answerable to his nature: how much more will that God of spirits, who is purity itself, look to be harboured in a cleanly room! "Into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin."[2]

What friend would be pleased that we should lodge him in a lazar-house? or, who would abide to have a toad lie in his bosom? Surely it is not in the verge of created nature to yield any thing that can be so noisome and odious to the sense of man, as sin is to that absolute and essential Goodness. His pure eyes cannot endure the sight of sin; neither can he endure that the sinner should come within the sight of him. 'Away from me, ye wicked,' is his charge both here and hereafter.

It is the privilege and happiness of the pure in heart, that they shall see God: see him both in the end and in the way, enjoying the vision of him both in grace and in glory. This is no object for impure eyes.

Descend into thyself therefore, and ransack thy heart, whoever wouldst be a true client of devotion: search all the close windings of it with the torches of the law of God; and, if there be any iniquity found lurking in the secret corners thereof, drag it

[1] Luke, xi. 25. [2] Wis. i. 4.

out and abandon it: and when thou hast done, that thy fingers may retain no pollution, say, with the holy Psalmist, 'I will wash my hands in innocence: so will I go to thine altar.'[1] Presume not to approach the altar of God, there to offer the sacrifice of thy devotion with unclean hands; else thine offering shall be so far from winning an acceptance for thee from the hands of God, as that thou shalt make thine offering abominable. And if a beast touch the mount, it shall die.[2]

As the soul must be clean from sin, so it must be clear and free from distractions. The intent of our devotion is to welcome God to our hearts: now where shall we entertain him, if the rooms be full, thronged with cares and turbulent passions? The Spirit of God will not endure to be crowded up together with the world in our strait lodgings; a holy vacuity must make way for him in our bosoms. The divine pattern of devotion, in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily, retires into the mount to pray; he that carried heaven with him, would even thus leave the world below him. Alas! how can we hope to mount up to heaven in our thoughts, if we have the clogs of earthly cares hanging at our heels?

Yea, not only must there be shutting out of all distractive cares and passions, which are professed enemies to our quiet conversing with God in our devotion, but there must be also a denudation of the mind from all those images of our phantasy, how pleasing soever, that may carry our thoughts aside from those better objects. We are like to foolish children, who, when they should be sted-

[1] Ps. xxvi. 6. [2] Exod. xix. 13.

fastly looking on their books, are apt to gaze after every butterfly that passeth by them. Here must be, therefore, a careful intention[1] of our thoughts; a restraint from all vain and idle rovings; and a holding ourselves close to our divine task. While Martha is troubled about many things, her devouter sister, having chosen the better part, plies the one thing necessary, which shall never be taken from her; and, while Martha would feast Christ with bodily fare, she is feasted of Christ with heavenly delicacies.

After the heart is thus cleansed and thus cleared, it must be in the next place decked with true *humility*, the cheapest, yet best ornament of the soul.

If the wise man tells us, that "pride is the beginning of sin,"[2] surely all gracious dispositions must begin in humility. The foundation of all high and stately buildings must be laid low. They are the lowly vallies that soak in the showers of heaven, which the steep hills shelve off, and prove dry and fruitless: 'To that man will I look,' saith God, 'that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.'[3] Hence it is that the more eminent any man is in grace, the more he is dejected in the sight of God. The father of the faithful comes to God under the style of 'dust and ashes;'[4] David, under the style of 'a worm and no man;'[5] Agur, the son of Jakeh, under the title of 'more brutish than any man; and one that hath not the understanding of a

[1] Fixedness.—Ed. [2] Ecclus. x. 13.
[3] Is. lxvi. 2. [4] Gen. xviii. 27.
[5] Ps. xx. 6.

pollution, which we have drawn from the tainted loins of our first parents, and those innumerable actual wickednesses derived therefrom which have stained our persons and lives. How can we be but thoroughly humbled, to see our souls utterly overspread with the odious and abominable leprosy of sin? We find that Uzziah bore up stoutly awhile against the priests of the Lord, in the maintenance of his sacrilegious presumption; but when he saw himself turned lazar, on the sudden he is confounded in himself, and, in a depth of shame, hastens away from the presence of God to a sad and penitential retiredness.[1] We should need no other arguments to loath ourselves than the sight of our own faces, so miserably deformed with the filthy and hateful scurf of our iniquity. Neither only must we be content to shame and grieve our eyes with the foul nature and condition of our sins, but we must represent them to ourselves in all the circumstances that may aggravate their heinousness. "Alas, Lord, any one sin is able to damn a soul; I have committed many, yea, numberless; they have not possessed me single; but, as that evil spirit said, their name is Legion. Neither have I committed these sins once, but often. Thine angels, that were, sinned but once, and are damned for ever: I have frequently reiterated the same offences: where then, were it not for thy mercy, shall I appear? Neither have I only done them in the time of my ignorance, but since I received sufficient illumination from thee; it is not in the dark that I have stumbled and fallen, but in the midst of the clear light and sun-

[1] 2 Chron. xxvi.

shine of the gospel, and in the very face of thee, my God. Neither have these been the slips of my weakness, but the bold miscarriages of my presumption. Neither have I offended out of inconsideration and inadvertency, but after and against the checks of a remurmuring conscience; after so many gracious warnings and fatherly admonitions; after so many fearful examples of thy judgments; after so many infinite obligations of thy favours."

And thus having looked inward into ourselves, and taken an impartial view of our own vileness, it will be requisite to cast our eyes upward unto heaven, and there to see against whom we have offended, even against an Infinite Majesty and Power, an Infinite Mercy, an Infinite Justice;—that Power and Majesty which hath 'spread out the heavens as a curtain; and hath laid the foundations of the earth so sure that it cannot be moved; who hath shut up the sea with bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shalt thou stay thy proud waves;'[1] who doeth whatsoever he will in heaven and in earth; who commandeth the devils to their chains; able, therefore, to take infinite vengeance on sinners;—that mercy of God the Father, who gave his own Son out of his bosom for our redemption; that mercy of God the Son, who, 'thinking it no robbery to be equal unto God, for our sakes made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient to the death, even the accursed death of the cross;'[2]—that mercy of God the Holy Ghost, who hath made that Christ mine,

[1] Ps. civ. 2; Job, xxxviii. 4—11. [2] Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

and hath sealed to my soul the benefit of that blessed redemption;—lastly, that justice of God, which, as it is infinitely displeased with every sin, so will be sure to take infinite vengeance on every impenitent sinner.

And, from hence, it will be fit and seasonable for the devout soul to look downward into that horrible pit of eternal confusion; and there to see the dreadful, unspeakable, unimaginable torments of the damned: to represent unto itself the terrors of those everlasting burnings; the fire and brimstone of that infernal Tophet; the merciless and unwearied tyranny of those hellish executioners; the shrieks and howlings and gnashings of the tormented; the unpitiable, interminable, unmitigable tortures of those ever-dying, and yet never-dying souls. By all which we shall justly affright ourselves into a deep sense of the dangerous and woeful condition, wherein we lie in the state of nature and impenitence; and shall be driven with a holy eagerness to seek for Christ, the Son of the ever-living God, our blessed Mediator, in and by whom only we can look for the remission of all these our sins, a reconcilement with this most powerful, merciful, just God, and a deliverance of our souls from the hand of the nethermost hell.

It shall not now need or boot to bid the soul which is truly apprehensive of all these, to sue importunately to the Lord of Life for a freedom and rescue from these infinite pains of eternal death to which our sins have forfeited it, and for a present happy recovery of that favour which is better than life. Have we heard, or can we imagine some heinous malefactor that hath received the sentence of death, and is now bound hand and foot, ready

to be cast into a den of lions or a burning furnace; with what strong cries and passionate obsecrations he plies the judge for mercy? We may then conceive some little image of the vehement suit and strong cries of a soul truly sensible of the danger of God's wrath deserved by his sin, and the dreadful consequents of deserved imminent damnation: although, what proportion is there betwixt a weak creature and the Almighty? betwixt a moment and eternity?

Hereupon, therefore, follows a vehement longing, uncapable of a denial after Christ, and fervent aspirations to that Saviour by whom only we receive a full and gracious deliverance from death and hell, and a full pardon and remission of all our sins; and, if this come not the sooner, strong knockings at the gates of heaven; even so loud, that the Father of Mercies cannot but hear and open. Never did any contrite soul beg of God that was not prevented by his mercy: much more doth he condescend when he is strongly entreated. Our very entreaties are from him; he puts into us those desires which he graciously answers. Now, therefore, doth the devout soul see the God of all comfort to bow the heavens, and come down with healing in his wings; and hear him speak peace unto the heart thus thoroughly humbled: 'Fear not; thou shall not die, but live. Be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven thee.' He therefore comes in that divine grace of faith, effectually apprehending Christ the Saviour, and his infinite satisfaction and merits; comfortably applying all the sweet promises of the gospel, clinging close to that all-sufficient Redeemer, and in his most perfect obedience emboldening itself to challenge a

freedom of access to God, and confidence of appearance before the tribunal of heaven. And now the soul, clad with Christ's righteousness, dares look God in the face; and can both challenge and triumph over all the powers of darkness; for, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'[1]

By how much deeper the sense of our misery and danger is, so much more welcome and joyful is the apprehension of our deliverance; and so much more thankful is our acknowledgment of that unspeakable mercy. The soul, therefore, that is truly sensible of this wonderful goodness of its God, as it feels a marvellous joy in itself, so it cannot but break forth into cheerful and holy, though secret gratulations: 'The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness: he keepeth not his anger for ever: he hath not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me after my iniquities.' 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.' 'I will thank thee; for thou hast heard me, and hast not given me over to death, but art become my salvation.' 'Oh, speak good of the Lord, all ye works of his: praise thou the Lord, O my soul.'[2]

The more feelingly the soul apprehends, and the more thankfully it digests the favours of God in its pardon and deliverance, the more freely doth the God of Mercy impart himself to it; and the more God imparts himself to it, the more it loves

[1] Rom. v. 1.
[2] Psalms, ciii. 8–10; cxvi. 12, 13; cxviii. 18, 21; ciii 22.

him, and the more heavenly acquaintance and entireness grows between God and it. And now that love, which was but a spark at first, grows into a flame, and wholly takes up the soul. This fire of heavenly love in the devout soul, is and must be heightened more and more, by the addition of the holy incentives of divine thoughts, concerning the means of our freedom and deliverance.

And here offers itself to us that bottomless abyss of mercy in our redemption, wrought by the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ the just, by whose stripes we are healed; by whose blood we are ransomed; where none will befit us but admiring and adoring notions. We shall not disparage you, O ye blessed angels and archangels of heaven, if we shall say, ye are not able to look into the bottom of this divine love, wherewith 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'[1] None, oh! none can comprehend this mercy, but he that wrought it. Lord! what a transcendent, what an infinite love is this! what an object was this for thee to love! A world of sinners! Impotent, wretched creatures, that had despited thee; that had no motive for thy favour but deformity, misery, professed enmity! It had been mercy enough in thee, that thou didst not damn the world; but that thou shouldest love it, is more than mercy. It was thy great goodness to forbear the acts of just vengeance to the sinful world of man; but to give unto it tokens of thy love, is a favour beyond all expression. The least gift

[1] John, iii. 16.

from thee had been more than the world could hope for; but that thou shouldest not stick to give thine only begotten Son, the Son of thy love, the Son of thine essence, thy co-equal, co-eternal Son, who was more than ten thousand worlds, to redeem this one forlorn world of sinners, is love above all comprehension of men and angels. What diminution had it been to thee and thine essential glory, O thou great God of heaven, that the souls that sinned should have died and perished everlastingly! yet, so infinite was thy loving mercy, that thou wouldest rather give thine only Son out of thy bosom, than that there should not be a redemption for believers.

Yet, O God, hadst thou sent down thy Son to this lower region of earth, upon such terms as that he might have brought down heaven with him; that he might have come in the port and majesty of a God, clothed with celestial glory, to have dazzled our eyes, and to have drawn all hearts unto him; this might have seemed, in some measure, to have sorted with his divine magnificence: but thou wouldest have him to appear in the wretched condition of our humanity. Yet, even thus, hadst thou sent him into the world in the highest estate and pomp of royalty that earth could afford; that all the kings and monarchs of the world should have been commanded to follow his train, and to glitter in his court, and that the knees of all the potentates of the earth should have bowed to his sovereign Majesty, and their lips have kissed his dust; this might have carried some kind of appearance of a state next to divine greatness: but thou wouldest have him come in the despised form of a servant. And thou, O blessed Jesu, wast accord-

ingly willing, for our sakes, to submit thyself to nakedness, hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation, contempt, betraying, agonies, scorn, buffetings, scourgings, distention, crucifixion, death: O love above measure, without example, beyond admiration! 'Greater love,' thou sayest, 'hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;' but, oh, what is it then, that thou, who wert God and man, shouldest lay down thy life, more precious than many worlds, for thine enemies! Yet, had it been but the laying down of a life in a fair and gentle way, there might have been some mitigation of the sorrow of a dissolution. There is not more difference betwixt life and death, than there may be betwixt some one kind of death and another. Thine, O dear Saviour, was the painful, shameful, cursed death of the cross; wherein yet all that man could do into thee was nothing to that inward torment which, in our stead, thou enduredst from thy Father's wrath; when, in the bitterness of thine anguished soul, thou criedst out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Even thus, thus wast thou content to be forsaken, that we wretched sinners might be received to mercy. O love, stronger than death, which thou vanquished! more high, than that hell is deep, from which thou hast rescued us!

The sense of this infinite love of God cannot choose but ravish the soul, and cause it to go out of itself into that Saviour who hath wrought so mercifully for it; so as it may be nothing in itself, but what it hath, or is, may be Christ's. By the sweet powers, therefore, of faith and love, the soul finds itself united unto Christ feelingly, effectually, indivisibly; so as that it is not to be

distinguished betwixt the acts of both. 'To me to live is Christ,'[1] saith the blessed apostle; and, elsewhere, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which now I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'[2] 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,'[3] saith the spouse of Christ, in her bridal song. O blessed union, next to the hypostatical, whereby the human nature of the Son of God is taken into the participation of the eternal Godhead!

Out of the sense of this happy union, ariseth an unspeakable complacency and delight of the soul in that God and Saviour, who is thus inseparably ours, and by whose union we are blessed; and a high appreciation of him, above all the world; and a contemptuous under-valuation of all earthly things in comparison of him. And this is no other than a heavenly reflection of that sweet contentment which the God of mercies takes in the faithful soul: 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart, with one of thine eyes.' 'Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me. 'How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointment better than all spices!' And the soul answers him again in the same language of spiritual dearness: 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.' 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart; as a seal upon thine arm: for love is as strong as death;'[4] and, as in

[1] Phil. i. 21. [2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] Cant. ii. 16.
[4] Cant. iv. 9; vi, 4, 5; iv. 10; v. 10; viii. 6.

an ecstatical fit of passionate affection; 'Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.'[1]

Upon this gracious complacency will follow an absolute self-resignation, or giving up ourselves to the hands of that good God whose we are, and who is ours; and an humble contentedness with his good pleasure in all things; looking upon God with the same face, whether he smile upon us in his favours, or chastise us with his loving corrections. If he speak good unto us, 'Behold the servant of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word: if evil, it is the Lord; let him do whatsoever he will.' Here is therefore a cheerful acquiescence in God, and a hearty reliance, and casting ourselves upon the mercy of so bountiful a God, who having given us his Son, can in and with him deny us nothing.

Upon this subacted[2] disposition of heart, will follow a familiar, yet awful, compellation[3] of God and an emptying of our souls before him in all our necessities; for that God, who is infinitely merciful, yet will not have his favours otherwise conveyed to us, than by our supplications. The style of his dear ones is, 'His people, that prayeth;' and his own style is, 'The God, that heareth prayers.' To him, therefore, doth the devout heart pour out all his requests, with all true humility, with all fervour of spirit; as knowing that God will hear neither proud prayers, nor heartless. Wherein his holy desires are regulated by a just method; first suing for spiritual favours, as most worthy, then for temporal, as the appendages of better;

[1] Cant. ii. 5. [2] Subdued.—Ed. [3] Calling upon.—Ed.

and in both, aiming at the glory of our good God, more than our own advantage. And in the order of spiritual things, first and most for those that are most necessary and essential for our soul's health, than for secondary graces, that concern the prosperity and comfort of our spiritual life; absolutely craving those graces that accompany salvation; all others, conditionally, and with reference to the good pleasure of the munificent giver. Wherein, heed must be taken that our thoughts be not so much taken up with our expressions, as with our desires; and that we do not suffer ourselves to languish into an unfeeling length and repetition of our suits. Even the hands of a Moses may in time grow heavy: so therefore must we husband our spiritual strength that our devotion may not flag with over-tiring; but may be most vigorous at the last. And as we must enter into our prayers, not without preparatory elevations, so must we be careful to take a meet leave of God at their shutting up; following our supplications with the pause of a faithful and most lowly adoration, and, as it were, sending up our hearts into heaven, to see how our prayers are taken, and raising them to a joyful expectation of a gracious and successful answer from the Father of mercies.

Upon the comfortable feeling of a gracious condescent, follows a happy fruition of God in all his favours; so as we have not them, so much as God in them; which advanceth their worth a thousand fold, and, as it were, brings down heaven upon us. Whereas, therefore, the sensual man rests only in the mere use of any blessing, as health, peace,

prosperity, knowledge, and reacheth no higher; the devout soul in and through all these, sees and feels a God that sanctifies them to him, and enjoys therein his favour that is better than life. Even we men are wont, out of our good nature, to esteem a benefit, not so much for its own worth, as for the love and respect of the giver; small legacies, for this cause, find dear acceptation: how much more is it so betwixt God and the devout soul! It is the sweet apprehension of his love that makes all his gifts blessings. Do we not see some vain churl, though cried down by the multitude, herein secretly applauding himself that he hath bags at home? how much more shall the godly man find comfort against all the crosses of the world, that he is possessed of Him that possesseth all things, even God all-sufficient; the pledges of whose infinite love he feels in all the whole course of God's dealing with him!

Out of the true sense of this inward fruition of God, the devout soul breaks forth into cheerful thanksgivings to the God of all comfort; praising him for every evil that it is free from, for every good thing that it enjoyeth; for as it keeps a just inventory of all God's favours, so it often spreads them thankfully before him, and lays them forth, so near as it may, in the full dimensions; that so God may be no loser by him in any act of his benificence. Here, therefore, every of God's benefits must come into account; whether eternal or temporal, spiritual or bodily, outward or inward, public or private, positive or negative, past or present, upon ourselves or others: in all which he shall humbly acknowledge both God's free mercy, and his own

shameful unworthiness; setting off the favours of his good God the more, with the foil of his own confessed wretchedness, and unanswerableness to the least of his mercies.

Now, as there is infinite variety of blessings from the liberal hand of the Almighty, so there is great difference in their degrees; for, whereas there are three subjects of all the good we are capable of—the estate, body, soul; and each of these does far surpass other in value, the soul being infinitely more worth than the body, and the body far more precious than the outward estate; so the blessings that appertain to them in several, differ in their true estimation accordingly. If either we do not highly magnify God's mercy for the least, or shall set as high a prize upon the blessings that concern our estate as those that pertain to the body, or upon bodily favours as upon those that belong to the soul, we shall show ourselves very unworthy and unequal partakers of the divine bounty. But it will savour too much of earth, if we be more affected with temporal blessings than with spiritual and eternal. By how much nearer relation then any favour hath to the fountain of goodness, and by how much more it conduceth to the glory of God, and ours in him, so much higher place should it possess in our affection and gratitude. No marvel therefore, if the devout heart be raised above itself, and transported with heavenly raptures, when, with Stephen's eyes, it beholds the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God, fixing itself upon the consideration of the infinite merits of his life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; and finding itself swallowed up in the depth of that

divine love, from whence all mercies flow into the soul, so as that it runs over with passionate thankfulness; and is therefore deeply affected with all other his mercies, because they are derived from that boundless ocean of divine goodness.

Unspeakable is the advantage that the soul raises to itself by this continual exercise of thanksgiving; for the grateful acknowledgment of favours is the way to more. Even amongst men whose hands are short and strait, this is the means to pull no further benificence; how much more from the God of all consolation, whose largest bounty diminisheth nothing of his store! And herein the devout soul enters into its heavenly task, beginning upon earth those hallelujahs which it shall perfect above, in the blessed choir of saints and angels; ever praising God, and saying, 'Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever.' Amen.

SECT. 2.—*Of our reading and hearing God's word.*

NONE of all the services of God can be acceptably, nor not unsinfully performed, without due devotion. As therefore in our prayers and thanksgivings, so in the other exercises of divine worship, especially *in the reading and hearing of God's word*, and in our receipt of the blessed sacrament; it is so necessary, that without it we offer to God a mere carcass of religious duty, and profane that sacred name we would pretend to honour.

First, then, we must come to God's book, not

without a holy reverence, as duly considering both what and whose it is; even no other than the word of the ever-living God, by which we shall once be judged. Great reason have we therefore to make a difference betwixt it and the writings of the holiest men; even no less than betwixt the authors of both. God is true; yea, truth itself; and that which David said in his haste, St. Paul said in full deliberation: 'Every man is a liar.'[1]

Before we put our hand to this sacred volume, it will be requisite to elevate our hearts to that God whose it is, for both his leave and his blessing. 'Open mine eyes,' says the sweet singer in Israel, 'that I may behold the wondrous things of thy law.'[2] Lo, David's eyes were open before to other objects, but when he comes to God's book he can see nothing without a new act of apertion:[3] letters he might see, but wonders he could not see, till God did unclose his eyes and enlighten them. It is not, therefore, for us presumptuously to break in upon God, and to think, by our natural abilities, to wrest open the precious caskets of the Almighty, and to fetch out all his treasure thence at pleasure; but we must come tremblingly before him, and in all humility crave his gracious admission. I confess I find some kind of envy in myself, when I read of those scrupulous observances of high respects given by the Jews to the book of God's law, and when I read of a Romish saint[4] that never read the scriptures but upon his knees, and compare it with the careless neglect whereof I can accuse myself, and perhaps some others. Not that

[1] Psalm cxvi. 11; Rom. iii. 4. [2] Psalm cxix. 18.
[3] Opening.—Ed. [4] Carolus Boromæus.

we should rest in the formality of outward ceremonies of reverence, wherein it were more easy to be superstitious than devout; but that our outward deportment may testify and answer the awful disposition of our hearts. Whereto we shall not need to be excited, if we be thoroughly persuaded of the divine original and authority of that sacred word. It was motive enough to the Ephesians, zealously to plead for and religiously to adore the image of their Diana, that it was 'the image that fell down from Jupiter.'[1] Believe we and know that the scripture is inspired by God, and we can entertain it with no other than an awful address; and we cannot be Christians if we do not so believe.

Every clause therefore of that God-inspired volume must be as reverently received by us, so seriously weighed and carefully laid up, as knowing that there is no tittle there without his use. What we read, we must labour to understand; what we cannot understand, we must admire silently, and modestly inquire of. There are plain truths; and there are deep mysteries. The bounty of God hath left this well of living water open for all: what runs over is for all comers; but every one hath not wherewith to draw. There is no Christian that may not enjoy God's book; but every Christian may not interpret it. Those shallow fords that are in it may be waded by every passenger; but there are deeps wherein he that cannot swim may drown. 'How can I without a guide?' said that Ethiopian eunuch. Wherefore serves the tongue of the learned, but to direct the ignorant? Their modesty is

[1] Acts, xix. 35.

of no less use than the others' skill. It is a woeful condition of a church when no man will be ignorant.[1]

What service can our eyes do us in the ways of God without our thoughts? Our diligent and frequent reading, therefore, must be attended with our holy meditation. We feed on what we read; but we digest only what we meditate of. What is in our bible is God's; but that which is in our hearts is our own. By all which, our care must be, not so much to become wiser, as to become better; labouring still to reduce all things to godly practice.

Finally, as we enter into this task with the lifting up of our hearts for a blessing, so we shut it up in the ejaculations of our thanksgiving to that God, who hath blessed us with the free use of his word.

(2.) Our eye is our best guide to God our Creator; but our ear is it that leads us to God our Redeemer. 'How shall they believe, except they hear?' Which that we may effectually do, our devotion suggests unto us some duties before we act, some in the act, some after the act.

It is the apostle's charge, that we should be 'swift to hear;' but heed must be taken that we make not more haste than good speed. We may not be so forward, as not to look to our foot when we go to the house of God; lest, if we be too ready to hear, we offer the sacrifice of fools.[2] What are the

[1] The remarkable applicability of some passages in these writings to the state of our own times we must ascribe, not merely to the comprehensive mind which gave them birth, but to an actual resemblance, in some habits of thinking at least, between the present period and the nearly corresponding portion of the seventeenth century.—Ed.

[2] Eccl. v. 1.

feet of the soul, but our affections? If these be not set right, we may easily stumble and wrench at God's threshold. Rash actions can never hope to prosper. As, therefore, to every great work, so to this, there is a due preparation required; and this must be done by meditation first, then by prayer.

Our meditation first sequesters the heart from the world, and shakes off those distractive thoughts which may carry us away from these better things. For what room is there for God where the world hath taken up the lodging? 'We cannot serve God and mammon.' Then, secondly, it seizes upon the heart for God, fixing our thoughts upon the great business we go about; recalling the greatness of that Majesty into whose presence we enter, and the main importance of the service we are undertaking; and examining our intentions wherewith we address ourselves to the work intended: "I am now going to God's house; wherefore do I go thither? Is it to see, or to be seen? Is it to satisfy my own curiosity in hearing what the preacher will say? Is it to satisfy the law, that requires my presence? Is it to please others eyes, or to avoid their censures? Is it for fashion? Is it for recreation? Or is it with a sincere desire to do my soul good, in gaining more knowledge, in quickening my affections? Is it in a desire to approve myself to my God, in the conscience of my humble obedience to his command, and my holy attendance upon his ordinance?" And where we find our ends amiss, chiding and rectifying our obliquities; where just and right, prosecuting them towards a further perfection.

Which that it may be done, our meditation must be seconded by our prayers. It is an unholy

rudeness to press into the presence of that God whom we have not invoked. Our prayers must be, that God would yet more prepare us for the work, and sanctify us to it, and bless us in it; that he would remove our sins; that he would send down his Spirit into our hearts, which may enable us to this great service; that he would bless the preacher in the delivery of his sacred message; that he would be pleased to direct his messenger's tongue to the meeting with our necessities; that he would free our hearts from all prejudices and distractions; that he would keep off all temptations, which might hinder the good entertainment and success of his blessed word; finally, that he would make us truly teachable, and his ordinance the power of God to our salvation.

In the act of hearing, devotion calls us to *reverence, attention, application.*

Reverence to that great God, who speaks to us by the mouth of a weak man; for, in what is spoken from God's chair agreeable to the scriptures, the sound is man's, the substance of the message is God's. Even an Eglon, when he hears of a message from God, riseth out of his seat.[1] It was not St. Paul's condition only, but of all his faithful servants, to whom he had committed the word of reconciliation: they 'are ambassadors for Christ; as if God did beseech us by them, they pray us, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God.'[2] The embassy is not the bearer's, but the king's; and if we do not acknowledge the great King of heaven in the voice of the gospel, we cannot but incur a contempt. When, therefore, we see God's messenger

[1] Judges, iii. 20. [2] 2 Cor. v. 20.

in his pulpit, our eye looks at him, as if it said with Cornelius, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.'[1] Whence cannot but follow, together with an awful disposition of mind, a reverent deportment of the body; which admits not a wild and roving eye, a drowsy head, a chatting tongue, a rude and indecent posture, but composes itself to such a site as may best befit a pious soul in so religious an employment. Neither do we come as authorized judges, to sit upon the preacher; but as humble disciples, to sit at his feet.

Reverence cannot but draw on attention. We need not be bidden to hang on the lips of him whom we honour. It is the charge of the Spirit, 'Let him that hath an ear, hear:' every one hath not an ear; and of those that have an ear, every one heareth not. The soul hath an ear as well as the body; if both these ears do not meet together in one act, there is no hearing. Common experience tells us, that when the mind is otherwise taken up, we do no more hear what a man says, than if we had been deaf, or he silent. Hence is that first request of Abigail to David, 'Let thy handmaid speak to thine ears; and hear the words of thy handmaid:'[2] and Job so importunately urgeth his friends, 'Hear diligently my speech and my declaration with your ears.'[3] The outward ear may be open, and the inward shut: if way be not made through both, we are deaf to spiritual things. 'Mine ear hast thou bored,' or 'digged,' saith the Psalmist; the Vulgate reads it, 'Mine ears hast

[1] Acts, x, 33. [2] 1 Sam. xxv. 24.
[3] Job, xiii. 17.

thou perfected.'[1] Surely our ears are grown up with flesh; there is no passage for a perfect hearing of the voice of God, till we have made it by a spiritual perforation.

And now that the ear is made capable of good counsel, it doth as gladly receive it; taking in every good lesson, and longing for the next; like unto the dry and chopped earth, which soaks in every silver drop that falls from the clouds, and thirsteth for more, not suffering any of that precious liquor to fall beside it.

Neither doth the devout man care to satisfy his curiosity as hearing only that he might hear; but reducts[2] all things to a saving use, bringing all he hears home to his heart by a self-reflecting application; like a practicer of the art of memory, referring everything to its proper place. If it be matter of comfort: "There is for my sick-bed; there is for my outward losses; there for my drooping under afflictions; there for the sense of my spiritual desertions." If matter of doctrine, "There is for my settlement in such a truth; there for the conviction of such an error; there for my direction in such a practice." If matter of reproof, he doth not point at his neighbour, but deeply chargeth himself: "This meets with my dead-heartedness and security; this with my worldly-mindedness; this with my self-love and flattery of mine own estate; this with my uncharitable censoriousness; this with my foolish pride of heart; this with my hypocrisy; this with my neglect of God's services and my duty." Thus, in all the variety of the holy passages of the sermon, the devout mind is taken

[1] Psalm, xl. 6. [2] Reduces.—Ed.

up with digesting what it hears, and working itself to a secret improvement of all the good counsel that is delivered; neither is ever more busy than when it sits still at the feet of Christ.

I cannot therefore approve the practice, (which yet I see commonly received,) of those who think it no small argument of their devotion to spend their time of hearing in writing large notes from the mouth of the preacher; which, however it may be a help for memory in the future, yet cannot, as I conceive, but be some prejudice to our present edification; neither can the brain get so much hereby as the heart loseth. If it be said, that by this means, an opportunity is given for a full rumination of wholesale doctrines afterwards, I yield it; but withal I may say, that our after-thoughts can never do the work so effectually as when the lively voice sounds in our ears and beats upon our heart: but herein I submit my opinion to better judgments.

The food that is received into the soul by the ear, is afterwards chewed in the mouth thereof by memory, concocted in the stomach by meditation, and dispersed into the parts by conference and practice.

True devotion finds the greatest part of the work behind. It was a just answer, that John Gerson reports,[1] given by a Frenchman, who, being asked by one of his neighbours if the sermon were done: "No," saith he, "it is said, but it is not done; neither will be, I fear, in haste." What are we the better, if we hear and remember not? If we be such auditors as the Jews were wont to call

[1] Serm. ad Eccles. Cautelam.

sieves, that retain no moisture that is poured into them? What the better if we remember, but think not seriously of what we hear, or if we practise not carefully what we think of? Not that which we hear is our own: but that which we carry away. Although all memories are not alike; one receives more easily, another retains longer. It is not for every one to hope to attain to that ability that he can go away with the whole fabric of a sermon, and readily recount it unto others; neither doth God require that of any man which he hath not given him. Our desires and endeavours may not be wanting where our powers fail. It will be enough for weak memories if they can so lay up those wholesome counsels which they receive, as that they may fetch them forth when they have occasion to use them: and that what they want in the extent of memory, they supply in the care of their practice. Indeed that is it wherein lies the life of all religious duties; and, without which, they are but idle formalities. That which the philosopher said of all virtue, I must say of true godliness—that it consists in action. Our Saviour did not say, 'Blessed are ye, if you know these things;' but, 'If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.' The end of our desire of the sincere milk of the gospel is, that we may grow thereby in the stature of all grace unto the fulness of God.'

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 2; Eph. iii. 19.

SECTION III.

Of our Receipt of the Blessed Sacraments.

THE highest of all God's services are his sacraments; which therefore require the most eminent acts of our devotion.

The sacrament of initiation, which, in the first planting of a church, is administered only to those of riper age and understanding, calls for all possible reverence and religious addresses of the receivers; wherein the primitive times were punctually observant, both for substance and ceremony. Now, in a settled and perpetuated church, in which the virtue of the covenant descends from the parent to the child, there seems to be no use of our preparatory directions; only it is fit that our devotion should call our eyes back to what we have done in our infancy, and whereto we are ever obliged; that our full age may carefully endeavour to make our word good, and may put us in mind of our sinful failings.

That other sacrament of our spiritual nourishment, which our Saviour, as his farewell, left us for a blessed memorial of his death and passion, can never be celebrated with enough devotion. Far be it from us to come to this feast of our God in our common garments; the soul must be trimmed up, if we would be meet guests for the Almighty. The great Master of the Feast will neither abide us to come naked nor ill clad. Away, therefore, first with the old beastly rags of our wonted corruptions. Due examination comes in first, and thoroughly searches the soul; and finds

out all the secret foulness and defilements that it hides within it; and, by the aid of true penitence, strips it of all those loathsome clouts, wherewith it was polluted. Sin may not be clothed upon with grace. Joshua's filthy garments must be plucked off, ere he can be capable of precious robes.[1] Here may be no place for our sinful lusts, for our covetous desires, for our natural infidelity, for our malicious purposes, for any of our unhallowed thoughts. The soul, clearly divested of these and all other known corruptions, must, in the next place, instead thereof, be furnished with such graces and holy pre-dispositions, as may fit it for so heavenly a work.

(1.) Amongst the graces requisite, Faith justly challengeth the first place, as that which is both most eminent, and necessarily presupposed to the profitable receipt of this sacrament; for, whereas as the main end of this blessed banquet is the strengthening of our faith, how should that receive strength which hath not being? To deliver these sacred viands to an unbeliever, is to put meat into the mouth of a dead man. Now, therefore, must the heart raise up itself to new acts of believing, and must lay faster hold on Christ, and bring him closer to the soul; more strongly applying to itself, the infinite merits of his most perfect obedience, and of his bitter death and passion, and erecting itself to a desire and expectation of a more vigorous and lively apprehension of its omnipotent Redeemer. Neither can this faith be either dead or solitary; but is still really operative, and attended, as with other graces, so especially with a serious repentance; whose wonderful power is, to undo our former sins, and to mould

[1] Zech. iii. 4.

the heart and life to a better obedience; a grace so necessary, that the want of it, as in extreme corruption of the stomach, turns the wholesome food into poison. An impenitent man therefore, coming to God's board, is so far from benefiting himself, as that he eats his own judgment. Stand off from this holy table, all ye that have not made your peace with your God, or that harbour any known sin in your bosom: not to eat is uncomfortable, but to eat in such a state is deadly; yet rest not in this plea, that ye cannot come because ye are unreconciled; but as ye love your souls, be reconciled that you may come.

Another grace necessarily pre-required, is charity to our brethren, and readiness to forgive; for this is a communion, as with Christ the head, so with all the members of his mystical body. This is the true love-feast of God our Saviour; wherein we profess ourselves inseparably united both to him and his. If there be more hearts than one at God's table, he will not own them. These holy elements give us an emblem of ourselves: this bread is made up of many grains, incorporated into one mass; and this wine is the confluent juice of many clusters; neither do we partake of several loaves, or variety of liquors, but all eat of one bread, and drink of one cup. Here is then no place for rancour and malice; none for secret grudgings and heart-burnings: 'Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.'[1] Neither may we do as those two emulous commanders of Greece

[1] Matt. v. 23, 24.

did, who resolved to leave their spite behind them at Mount Athos, and to take it up again in their return: here must be an absolute and free acquitting of all the back-reckonings of our unkindness, that we may receive the God of Peace into a clear bosom.

(2.) Besides these graces, there are certain holy predispositions; so necessary, that without them our souls can never hope to receive true comfort in this blessed sacrament.

Whereof the first is a hungering and thirsting desire after these gracious means of our salvation. What good will our meat do us without an appetite? Surely without it there is no expectation of either relish or digestion. As, therefore, those that are invited to some great feast care first to feed their hunger, ere they feed their body, labouring by exercise to get a stomach ere they employ it; so it concerns us to do here: and, as those that are listless and weak stomached, are wont to whet their appetite with sharp sauces; so must we, by the tart applications of the law, quicken our desires of our Saviour here exhibited. Could we but see our sins, and our miseries by sin; could we see God frowning, and hell gaping wide to swallow us; we should not need to be bidden to long for our Deliverer; and every pledge of his favour would be precious to us.

Upon the apprehension of our need of a Saviour, and so happy a supply thereof presented unto us, must needs follow a renewed act of true thankfulness of heart to our good God, that hath both given us his dear Son to work our redemption, and his blessed sacrament to seal up unto us our redemption, thus wrought and purchased.

And with souls thus thankfully elevated unto God, we approach, with all reverence, to that heavenly table, where God is both the feast-master and the feast. What intention of holy thoughts, what fervour of spirit, what depth of devotion, must we now find in ourselves! Doubtless, out of heaven no object can be so worthy to take up our hearts.

What a clear representation is here of the great work of our redemption! How is my Saviour, by all my senses, here brought home to my soul! How is his passion lively acted before mine eyes! for lo, my bodily eye doth not more truly see bread and wine, than the eye of my faith sees the body and blood of my dear Redeemer: thus was his sacred body torn and broken; thus was his precious blood poured out for me. My sins, wretched man that I am! helped thus to crucify my Saviour; and, for the discharge of my sins, would he be thus crucified.

Neither did he only give himself for me upon the cross; but lo, he both offers and gives himself to me in this his blessed institution. What had this general gift been without this application? Now my hand doth not more sensibly take, nor my mouth more really eat this bread, than my soul doth spiritually receive and feed on the bread of life. O Saviour, thou art the living bread, that came down from heaven. Thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood is drink indeed. Oh, that I may so eat of this bread, that I may live for ever! He that cometh to thee, shall never hunger: he that believeth in thee, shall never thirst. Oh, that I could now so hunger and so thirst for thee, that my soul could be for ever satisfied with thee! Thy people of old were fed with manna in the wil-

derness; yet they died; that food of angels could not keep them from perishing; but oh, for the hidden Manna, which giveth life to the world, even thy blessed self! Give me ever of this bread, and my soul shall not die, but live. Oh, the precious juice of the fruit of the vine, wherewith thou refreshest my soul! Is this the blood of the grape? Is it not rather thy blood of the New Testament, that is poured out for me? Thou speakest, O Saviour, of new wine, that thou wouldest drink with thy disciples in thy Father's kingdom: can there be any more precious and pleasant than this, wherewith thou cheerest the believing soul? Our palate is now dull and earthly, which shall then be exquisite and celestial; but, surely, no liquor can be of equal price or sovereignty with thy blood. Oh, how unsavoury are all earthly delicacies to this heavenly draught! O God, let not the sweet taste of this spiritual nectar ever go out of the mouth of my soul. Let the comfortable warmth of this blessed cordial ever work upon my soul, even till, and in, the last moment of my dissolution.

Dost thou bid me, O Saviour, do this in remembrance of thee? oh, how can I forget thee? how can I enough celebrate thee, for this thy unspeakable mercy? Can I see thee thus crucified before my eyes, and for my sake thus crucified, and not remember thee? Can I find my sins accessary to this thy death, and thy death meritoriously expiating all these my grievous sins, and not remember thee? Can I hear thee freely offering thyself to me, and feel thee graciously conveying thyself into my soul, and not remember thee? I do remember thee, O Saviour: but, oh, that I could

yet more effectually remember thee—with all the passionate affections of a soul sick of thy love; with all zealous desires to glorify thee; with all fervent longings after thee and thy salvation! I remember thee, in thy sufferings; oh, do thou remember me, in thy glory!

(3.) Having thus busied itself with holy thoughts in the time of the celebration, the devout soul breaks not off in an abrupt unmannerliness, without taking leave of the great Master of this heavenly feast; but, with a secret adoration, humbly blesseth God for so great a mercy, and heartily resolves and desires to walk worthy of the Lord Jesus, whom it hath received; and to consecrate itself wholly to the service of him that hath so dearly bought it, and hath given it these pledges of its eternal union with him.

(4.) The devout soul hath thus supped in heaven, and returns home; yet the work is not thus done; after the elements are out of eye and use, there remains a digestion of this celestial food by holy meditation. And now it thinks, oh, what a blessing have I received to-day! No less than my Lord Jesus, with all his merits; and, in and with him, the assurance of the remission of all sins, and everlasting salvation. How happy am I, if I be not wanting to God and myself! How unworthy shall I be, if I do not strive to answer this love of my God and Saviour, in all hearty affection, and in all holy obedience!

And now, after this heavenly repast, how do I feel myself? What strength, what advantage hath my faith gotten? How much am I nearer to heaven than before? How much faster hold have I taken of

my blessed Redeemer? How much more firm and sensible is my interest in him?

Neither are these thoughts and this examination the work of the next instant only; but they are such as must dwell upon the heart, and must often solicit our memory and excite our practice, that by this means we may frequently renew the efficacy of this blessed sacrament, and our souls may batten more and more with this spiritual nourishment, and may be fed up to eternal life.

Sect. 4.—*Specialties of Devotion.*

These are the generalities of our devotion which are of common use to all Christians. There are, besides these, certain specialties of it, applicable to several occasions, times, places, persons. For there are morning and evening devotions; devotions proper to our board, to our closet, to our bed; to God's day, to our own; to health, to sickness; to several callings, to recreations; to the way, to the field, to the church, to our home; to the student, to the soldier, to the magistrate, to the minister; to the husband, wife, child, servant; to our own persons, to our families: the severalties whereof, as they are scarce finite for number, so are most fit to be left to the judgment and holy managing of every Christian; neither is it to be imagined, that any soul which is taught of God, and hath any acquaintance with heaven, can be to seek in the particular application of common rules to his own necessity or expedience.

Sect. 5.—*Recapitulation.*

The result of all is:

A devout man is he that ever sees the invisible, and ever trembleth before that God he sees; that walks ever, here on earth, with the God of heaven, and still adores that Majesty with whom he converses; that confers hourly with the God of spirits in his own language, yet so as no familiarity can abate of his awe, nor fear abate ought of his love; to whom the gates of heaven are ever open, that he may go in at pleasure to the throne of grace, and none of the angelical spirits can offer to challenge him of too much boldness; whose eyes are well acquainted with those heavenly guardians, the presence of whom he doth as truly acknowledge as if they were his sensible companions. He is well known of the King of Glory for a daily suitor in the court of heaven, and none so welcome there as he. He accounts all his time lost that falls beside his God, and can be no more weary of good thoughts than of happiness.

His bosom is no harbour for any known evil; and it is a question whether he more abhors sin or hell. His care is, to entertain God in a clear and free heart; and therefore he thrusts the world out of doors, and humbly beseeches God to welcome himself to his own. He is truly dejected and vile in his own eyes: nothing but hell is lower than he; every of his slips are heinous, every trespass is aggravated to rebellion. The glory and favours of God heighten his humiliation. He hath looked down to the bottomless deep, and seen, with horror,

what he deserved to feel everlastingly. His cries have been as strong, as his fears just; and he hath found mercy more ready to rescue him, than he could be importunate. His hand could not be so soon put forth, as his Saviour's for deliverance.

The sense of this mercy hath raised him to an unspeakable joy, to a most fervent love of so dear a Redeemer. That love hath knit his heart to so meritorious a Deliverer, and wrought a blessed union betwixt God and his soul. That union can no more be severed from an infinite delight, than that delight can be severed from an humble and cheerful acquiescence in his munificent God. And now, as in a heavenly freedom he pours out his soul into the bosom of the Almighty, in all faithful suits for himself and others, so he enjoys God in the blessings received, and returns all zealous praises to the giver.

He comes reverently to the oracles of God, and brings not his eye, but his heart with him; not carelessly negligent in seeking to know the revealed will of his Maker, nor too busily inquisitive into his deep counsels; not too remiss in the letter, nor too peremptory in the sense; gladly comprehending what he may, and admiring what he cannot comprehend.

Doth God call for his ear? he goes awfully into the holy presence, and so hears as if he should now hear his last; catching every word that drops from the preacher's lips ere it fall to the ground, and laying it up carefully where he may be sure to fetch it. He sits not to censure, but to learn; yet speculation and knowledge is the least drift of his labour. Nothing is his own but what he practises.

Is he invited to God's feast? he hates to come in a foul and slovenly dress, but trims up his soul so as may be fit for a heavenly guest. Neither doth he leave his stomach at home, cloyed with the world; but brings a sharp appetite with him, and so feeds as if he meant to live for ever: all earthly delicacies are unsavory to him, in respect of that celestial manna. Shortly, he so eats and drinks as one that sees himself set at table with God and his angels, and rises and departs full of his Saviour; and in the strength of that meal, walks vigorously and cheerfully on towards his glory.

Finally, as he well knows that he lives, and moves, and hath his being in God, so he refers his life, motions, and being wholly to God; so acting all things as one that enjoys God in them, and, in the mean time, so walking on earth that he doth in a sort carry his heaven with him.

SELECT THOUGHTS;

OR,

CHOICE HELPS FOR A PIOUS SPIRIT:

A

CENTURY OF DIVINE BREATHINGS FOR

A RAVISHED SOUL,

BEHOLDING THE EXCELLENCIES OF HER LORD JESUS.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER

GRACE AND PEACE.

It pleased the all-wise and Holy God, who orders all events to his own glory, to make use of my late secession for the production of divers, not I hope unprofitable, tractates; wherein I much rejoice that my declined age, even in that retiredness, might be in any measure serviceable to his church. Now I send these select notions after their fellows; of which I wish you may find cause to say, with the wedding-guests at Cana, 'Thou hast reserved the best wine till now.'

The intent of this labour is, to put some good thoughts, reader, into thy mind, which would not otherwise, perhaps, have tendered themselves to thee; such, as I hope, may not a little further thee on thy journey to heaven. And if, in my labouring thitherward, I shall, through God's mercy, be a means of forwarding any soul but some steps up that steep way, how happy am I! To which purpose, I know no means more effectual than those meditations which conduce to the animation and vigour of Christian practice: such I have propounded to myself as most behoveful and necessary, especially for this age into which we are fallen; an age of more brain than heart, and that hath almost lost piety in the chase of some litigious truths. And surely, had I known how better to have placed my hours, I should gladly have changed my task; but, I must needs say, I have found this employment so useful and proper, as that I have looked upon those Polemical Discourses which have been forced from me, as no better than mere excursions. I wis, it will be long enough ere we wrangle ourselves into heaven: it must be

true contrition, pure consciences, holy affections, heavenly dispositions, hearty devotions, sound regeneration, faith working by love, an humble walking with God, that shall help us thither; and, whatsoever may tend to the advancing of any of these gracious works in us, is worthy to be dear and precious.

Such passages, reader, if thou shalt, according to my hopes, meet with here, bless God with me, and improve them to the best advantage of thy soul. Thus shall our gain be mutual, and our account happy in the day of the Lord Jesus: in whom farewell.

From Higham, near Norwich,
Feb. 7, 1647.

SELECT THOUGHTS.

I.

If miracles be ceased, yet marvels will never cease. There is no creature in the world wherein we may not see enough to wonder at; for there is no worm of the earth, no spire of grass, no leaf, no twig, wherein we may not see the footsteps of a Deity. The best visible creature is man: now, what man is he, that can make but a hair or a straw, much less any sensitive creature? So as no less than an infinite power is seen in every object that presents itself to our eyes. If, therefore, we look only upon the outsides of these bodily substances, and do not see God in every thing, we are no better than brutish: making use merely of our sense, without the least improvement of our faith or our reason. Contrary, then, to the opinion of those men who hold that a wise man should admire nothing, I say, that a man truly wise and good should admire every thing; or, rather, that infiniteness of wisdom and omnipotence, which shows itself in every visible object. Lord, what a beast am I, that I have suffered mine eyes to be taken up with shapes, and colours, and

quantities; and have not looked deeper at thee, with awful adoration and wonder, in every parcel of thy great creation! Henceforth, let me see nothing but thee, and look at all visible things but as the mere shadows of a glorious omnipotence.

II.

Our affections are then only safe and right when they are deduced from God, and have their rise from heaven. Then only can I take comfort of my love, when I can love my wife, my child, my friend, myself, my pleasures, and whatsoever contentments, in God. Thus I may be sure not to offend, either in the object or measure. No man can, in God, love whom he should not, nor immoderately love whom he should: this holy respect doth both direct and limit him, and shuts up his delights in the conscience of a lawful fruition. The like must be said of our joy, and fear, and grief, and whatever other affection; for we cannot derive our joy from God if we place it upon any sinful thing, or if we exceed in the measure of things allowed; we cannot fetch our fear from heaven, if it be cowardly and desparate; nor our grief, if it be merely worldly and heartless. And if our affections do begin from above, they will surely end there; closing up in that God who is the author and orderer of them. And such as our affections are, such will be the whole disposition of the soul, and the whole carriage of our actions; these are the feet of the soul, and which way the feet walk the whole man goes. Happy is the man that can be so far the master of himself, as to entertain no affections but such as he takes upon the rebound from heaven.

III.

Whence is this delicate scent in the rose and violet? It is not from the root, that smells of nothing; not from the stalk, that is as scentless as the root; not from the earth whence it grows, which contributes no more to these flowers than to the grass that grows by them; not from the leaf; not from the bud, before it be disclosed, which yields no more fragrance than the leaf, or stalk, or root; yet here I now find it. Neither is it here by any miraculous way, but in an ordinary course of nature, for all violets and roses of this kind yield the same redolence: it cannot be, but that it was potentially in that root and stem from which the flowers proceed, and there placed and thence drawn by that Almighty Power which has given these admirable virtues to several plants, and educes them in their due seasons to these excellent perfections. It is the same hand that works spiritually in his elect. Out of the soil of the renewed heart, watered with the dew of heaven, and warmed with the beams of his Spirit, God can and in his own season doth bring forth those sweet odours of grace and holy dispositions, which are most pleasing to himself; and if those excellencies be so closely lodged in their bosoms, that they do not discover themselves at all times, it should be no more strange to us than that this rose and violet are not to be found but in their own months: it is enough that the same virtue is still in the root, though the flower be vanished.

IV.

A man that looks at all things through the consideration of eternity, makes no more of a man

than of a flower: that lasts some days—he lasts some years; at their period both fade. Now what difference is there to be made betwixt days and years, in the thoughts of an eternal duration? Herein, therefore, I have a great advantage of a carnal heart. Such a one, bounding his narrow conceits with the present condition, is ready to admire himself and others for what they have or are, and is therefore dejected upon every miscarriage; whereas I behold myself, or that man in all his glory, vanishing; only measuring every man's felicity by the hopes and interest which he hath in a blessed eternity.

V.

When I am dead and forgotten, the world will be as it is; the same succession and varieties of seasons, the same revolutions of heaven, the same changes of earth and sea, the like occurrents of natural events and human affairs. It is not in my power to alter the course of things, or to prevent what must be. What should I do, but quietly take my part of the present; and humbly leave the care of the future to that all-wise Providence, which ordereth all things, even the most cross events, according to his most holy and just purposes?

VI.

The Scripture is the sun: the church is the clock, whose hand points us to, and whose sound tells us, the hour of the day. The sun we know to be sure and regularly constant in his motion: the clock, as it may fall out, may go too fast or too slow. We are wont to look at and listen to the clock, to know the time of the day; but, where we

find the variation sensible, to believe the sun against the clock, not the clock against the sun. As then we would condemn him of much folly, that should profess to trust the clock rather than the sun; so we cannot but justly tax the miscredulity of those who will rather trust to the church than to the Scripture.

VII.

What marvellous high respects hath God given to man above all his other visible creatures! What a house hath he put him into! how gorgeously arched, how richly pavemented! Wherefore serves all the furniture of heaven and earth, but for his use? What delicate provision hath that bountiful hand made for his palate, both of meats and liquors, by land and sea! What rich ornaments hath he laid up for him in his wardrobe of earth and waters! And wherefore serves the various music of birds but to please his ear? For, as for the brute creatures, all harmony to them is but as silence. Wherefore serves the excellent variety of flowers, surpassing Solomon in all his glory, but to please his eye? Mere grass is more acceptable to beasts. Yea, what creature but he, is capable to survey God's wonders in the deep? to contemplate the great fabric of the heavens? to observe the glorious bodies, and regular motions of the sun, moon, stars? And, which exceeds all conceivable mercies, who but he is capable of that celestial glory which is within that beautiful contignation? to be a companion of the blessed angels; yea, to be a limb of the mystical body of the Eternal Son of God, and to partake with him of his everlasting and incomprehensible glory? 'Lord, what is man,

manner; all ants keep their own way in their housing, journeys, provisions; all spiders do as perfectly and uniformly weave their web, as if they had been apprentices to the trade. The same instincts are seen also in the rational creatures, although in most cases overruled by their higher faculties. What an infinite Providence then is this we live under, that hath distributed to every creature, as a several form, so several inclinations, qualities, motions, proper to their own kind, and different from other; and keeps them in this constant uniformity and variety for the delight and contentment of man! O God, that I could be capable of enough wondering at thy great works! that I could be enough humbled under the sense of my own incapacity! that I could give thee so much more glory as I find more violence in myself!

IX.

When I saw my precious watch (now through an unhappy fall grown irregular) taken asunder and lying scattered upon the workman's shopboard, so as here lay a wheel, there the balance, here one gimmer, there another; straight my ignorance was ready to think when and how will all these ever piece together again in their former order? But when the skilful artisan had taken it a while in hand, and curiously pinned the joints, it now began to return to its wonted shape and constant motion, as if it had never been disordered. How could I choose but see in this the just emblem of a distempered church and state? Wherein, if all seem disjointed and every wheel laid aside by itself, so as an unknowing beholder would despair of a redress, yet if it shall please the great Artist of Heaven to put

his hand unto it, how soon might it return to a happy resettlement! Even so, blessed Lord, for thy great mercy's sake, make up the breaches of thy Sion, and repair the ruins of thy Jerusalem.

X.

We are, and we are not, all one man's children. Our bodies once met in one root; but our minds and dispositions do so differ, as if we had never been of kin. One man is so gentle and plausible that he would fain please all; another is so churlish and dogged, that he cares not whom he displeases, and hardly can be well pleased with himself; one so sparing and pinching that he grudges himself necessaries; another so vainly lavish that he cares not how he squanders his estate: one is tenderly pitiful, another mercilessly cruel; one religiously devout, another wildly profane; one cowardly fearful, another desperately courageous; one jovially cheerful and lightsome, another sad and dumpish, even to stupidity; one petulant and wanton, another austerely continent; one humble and low-conceited of rich endowments, another swollen big with a little. He did never read men to purpose, that is too much troubled with the harsh and unpleasing contrariety of humours which he meets with in the world; and he shall be too unthankful to God, that finding himself better composed than others, knows not whither to ascribe it; and too neglective of himself, that finding his own distempered, labours not to rectify it.

XI.

Nature, law, and grace divide all the ages of the world. Now, as it is in man, who is a lesser world,

that in every day there is a resemblance of his whole life; the morning is his childhood, the midway his youth, the evening his old age; so is it in this greater world. The dim break of day was the state of nature; and this was the nonage of the world, wherein the light of knowledge, both of human and divine things, was but weak and obscure.[1] The sun was risen higher in the state of the Law, but yet not without thick mists and shadows, till the high noon of that true Sun of Righteouness, who personally shone forth to the world; upon whose vertical point began the age of grace, that still continues; which is the clear afternoon and full vigour of the world, though now in its sensible declination: after this there shall be no time but eternity. These then are they which both the prophets and apostles have styled the last days; not only in respect of the times that went before them, but in regard that no time shall follow them. Neither have we reason to boggle at the large latitude of sixteen hundred years: there was neither of the two other periods of age but were longer than this. Besides, however childhood and youth have their fixed terms, which they ordinarily pass not, yet the duration of old age is indefinite. We have, in our youth, known some grey-heads that have continued vigorous till we have lived to match them in the colour of their livery. And if this be, as it is, the evening of the world, do we not

[1] This was the opinion generally received in Bishop Hall's time, and it continues still the popular theory. The true state of nature for man, however, is not the savage or uncultivated state, but that in which the essential qualities of his humanity are fully developed, and its ends attained. Such appears to have been his first condition on earth, under the immediate care and tuition of the Almighty.—Ed.

see much difference of time in the shutting in of the light? A summer's evening is a winter's day. But, if these were to the apostles the last days, how can they be other than in the last hour, yea, the last minute unto us? Why do we not put ourselves into a constant expectation of the end of all things, and set ourselves in a meet posture for the receipt of our returning Saviour?

XII.

It is a feeling and experimental expression that the apostle gives of a Christian, That he 'looks not on the things which are seen.'[1] Not that his eyes are so dim, as old Isaac's, that he cannot discern them, or that his inward senses are so stupified that he cannot judge of their true value; but that, taking an exact view of these earthly things, he descries so much vanity in them, as that he finds them not worthy to be looked at with the full bent of his desires: like as it is not the mere sight of a strange beauty that is forbidden, for a man may as well look upon a fair face as upon a good picture, but a settled and fixed aspect that feeds the eye and draws the heart to a sinful concupiscence. Thus doth not the Christian look upon the things that are seen, as making them the full scope and aim of his desires and affections: so far he takes notice of them, as to make his best, that is lawful and moderate, use of them; not so as to make them the chief object of his contemplation, the main drift of his cares. It is well observed by St. Basil, that as there are two contrary ways, the broad and the narrow, so there are two guides as contrary—

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Sense and Faith. Sense presents to us the pleasing delights on the one side; on the other, the present afflictions and persecutions that attend a good profession. Faith lays before us the glorious things of a future life, and the endless miseries and torments abiding for sinful souls in the world to come. Now, it is not for every one to deny all credit to his sense (alluring him with all present and visible pleasures, and discouraging him with the terror and pain of present and visible afflictions,) and to yield himself, hood-winked, to be led by faith (fore-promising only better things afar off, and fore-admonishing him of dangers, future and invisible.) Faith only is that heroical virtue which makes a man with a holy contempt to overlook all the pleasing baits of the world, and with a brave courage and fortitude to despise all the menaces and painful inflictions of its present fury. This works our eyes not to look upon the things which we cannot but see—the present shews of the world, whether alluring or terrifying. Had Lot but looked back on Sodom, the pleasant plain of Sodom that lay like the garden of God behind his back, he had never escaped into the mountain. Had the glorious Protomartyr fixed his eyes only upon his persecutors, his heart could not but have failed to see the fire in their faces, the sparkling of their eyes, the grinding of their teeth, the bending of their brows, the stopping of their ears, their furious running upon him, their violent halings and draggings; and lastly, a whole volley of stones discharged mortally upon him: he had been utterly daunted with such an impetuosity of death. But he, as not seeing any of this pomp and ostentation of horror, looks up stedfastly to heaven; and there

sees (that which might well make him blind to all other visible objects) the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and, upon this sight, he shut up his eyes and slept. The true Christian, then, hath, with holy Job, made a covenant with his eyes, not to look upon either the cruel insolencies of the raging world with fear and dejectedness, or on the tempting vanities of the world with amorous glances; but with a sober and constant resolution entertains the objects of both kinds. Very justly did Tertullian jeer that heathen philosopher who pulled out his eyes to avoid concupiscence; and can tell him, that a Christian can hold his eyes, and yet behold beauty unbewitched; and can be at once open-eyed to nature, and blind to lust. And what the apostle said of the use, he can practise of the sight, of the world and earthly objects; he can so behold them as if he beheld them not. How oft have we, in a deep study, fixed our eyes upon that which we the while thought not upon, neither perceived that we saw! So doth the Christian to these worldly glories, pleasures, profits; while his mind and affections are on 'the things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.'[1] There, Lord, let me behold those things which cannot yet be seen; but shall once, in the sight of them, make me blessed. And let me 'not look on the things that are seen: for the things that are seen are temporary; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'[2]

[1] Col. iii. 1. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

XIII.

There is not more strangeness than significance in that charge of the apostle, That we should 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ.'[1] The soul is, as it were, a body; not really and properly so, according to the gross error of Tertullian, but by way of allusion. This body of the soul then may not be naked, but must be clad: as our first parents were ashamed of their bodily nakedness; and so still are all their (not savage) posterity; so may we of our spiritual. Every sinner is naked: those rags that he hath are so far from hiding his nakedness, that they are part of it: his fairest moralities are but glittering sins; and his sins are his nakedness. Aaron 'had made Israel naked to their shame:'[2] not so much in that they were stript of their earrings, as that they were enwrapped in the sin of idolatry. No marvel if we run away and hide us from the presence of God, as our first parents did, while we are guilty to ourselves of our spiritual deformity. As then we are bodily naked when we come into the world, so we are spiritually naked while we are of the world; neither can it be either safe or comely for us till we be covered. There is no clothing can fit the soul but the Lord Jesus Christ. All other robes in the wardrobe of earth or heaven are too short, too strait; like those which the scorn of Hanun put upon David's messengers, reaching but to the hams; for, though the soul of man be finite, the sin of the soul is scarce so; and that sin must be covered, else there can be no safety for the soul; according to that of the psalmist,

[1] Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. iii. 27. [2] Exod. xxxii. 25.

'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.'[1] None, therefore, but the robes of an infinite righteousness can cover the soul so woefully dressed; none, therefore, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God blessed for ever, can cover the soul, that it may not appear unrighteous, or can cleanse the soul, that it may not be unrighteous: and cleansed it must be ere the Lord Jesus can be put on. We shall wrong his perfect holiness if we think we can slip him on, as a case, over our beastly rags. It is with us as with Joshua the high priest: the filthy garments must first be taken off; and then the Lord shall say unto us, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.'[2] We put on a garment when we apply it all over to our body, so as that part which is clothed appears not, but is defended from the air and from the eye. If we have truly put on the Lord Jesus nothing of ours is seen, but Christ is all in all to us: although this application goes yet deeper; for we so put him on, that we not only put ourselves into him, but also put him into ourselves by a mutual kind of spiritual incorporation. We put him on then upon our intellectual parts, by knowing him, by believing on him. 'This is eternal life to know thee, and whom thou has sent,' saith our Saviour; and for faith, no grace doth so sensibly apprehend him, and make him so feelingly ours. We put him on upon our wills and affections, when we take pleasure in him, when we love him, delight in him, and prefer him to our chiefest joy. Thus do we put him on: as our Lord, in our humble and duti-

[1] Psalm, xxxii. 1. [2] Zech. iii. 4.

ful subjection; as our Jesus in our faithful affiance; as Christ the anointed of God to be our king in all holy obedience; our priest in our willing consecration to him; our prophet in our cheerful readiness to be instructed by him. How happy are we if we be thus decked! We prank up these poor carcasses of ours gaily with no small expence; and when we have done, the stuff or the fashion, or both, wears out to nothing; but here is a garment that will never be out of fashion: 'Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever;' yea, the same to us: here we put him on in grace; there in eternal glory. The Israelities were forty years in the wilderness, yet their shoes not worn, their apparel not impaired;[1] but this attire shall not only hold good in the time of our wandering in this desert, but after we are come into the Canaan of glory, and is best at last. Wherefore do we put on our choicest attire on some high days, but to testify the cheerfulness of our hearts? 'Let thy garment be white,' saith the preacher, 'for now God accepteth thy works.'[2] Mephibosheth changed not his raiment since David went out, as one that would have the sorrow of his heart seen in the neglect of his clothes; although many a one under a gay coat hath a heavy heart; but this attire doth not only testify but make cheerfulness in the soul. 'Thou hast given me more joy of heart than they had in the time that their corn and their wine increased;'[3] and, 'In thy presence is the fulness of joy.'[4] What can this apparel of ours do, but keep us from a blast or a shower? It is so far from safeguarding the soul, that it many times wounds

[1] Deut. xxix. 5. [2] Eccles. ix. 7, 8. [3] Psalm, iv. 7.
[4] Psalm xvi. 11.

it, and that to the death. It was one of the main quarrels against the rich glutton, that he was every day clothed in purple and byss.[1] How many souls shall once wish that their bodies had been ever either naked or clad with hair-cloth! But this array, as it is infinitely rich and beautiful, so it is as surely defensative of the soul; and is no less than armour of proof against all assaults, all miseries.[2] What a deal of cost and pains do we bestow upon these wretched bodies of ours, only to make them pleasing and lovely to the eye of some beholders, as miserable perhaps as ourselves! and yet, when we have all done, we are, it may be, no better than hard-favoured and unhandsome creatures, and contemptible in those eyes from whom we desired most approbation. Jezebel, for all her licking, is cast out of the window and trodden to dirt in the streets. But this robe we cannot wear, and not be amiable in the eyes of the Holiest. 'Behold, thou art fair, my beloved; behold, thou art fair, and there is no spot in thee.'[3] Lo, in this case, the apparel makes the man. Neither is it in the power of any spiritual deformity to make us other than lovely in the sight of our God, while we have Christ put on upon us. Whatever, therefore, become of the outward man, let it be my care that my soul be vested with my Lord Jesus; so shall I be sure to be safe, rich, amiable here, and hereafter glorious. It was part of our Saviour's charge upon the mount, 'Take no care what to put on;' but it must be the main care of our lives how to put on Christ upon our souls. This is the prime stole, wherewith the father of the prodigal graceth his re-

[1] Luke, xvi. 19. [2] Eph. vi. 13. [3] Cant. i. 15.

turned son. The heaven of heavens is not worth such another. When I have once got this on my back, I shall say, though in a contrary sense with the spouse in the Canticles, 'I have put on my coat, how shall I put it off? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them.'[1]

XIV.

With how devout passion doth the Psalmist call to all the works of the Almighty to praise him! as well supposing, that every creature, even those that have no tongues to speak for themselves, yet have a tongue to praise their Maker: 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth his speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech, where their voice is not heard.'[2] Neither is the very earth defective in this duty; every plant says, "Look on me, and acknowledge the life, colour, form, smell, fruit, force, that I have from the power of my Creator:" every worm and fly says, "Look on me, and give God the praise of my living, sense, and motion:" every bird says, "Hear me, and praise that God, who hath given me these various feathers, and taught me these several notes:" every beast, while he bellows, bleats, brays, barks, roars, says, "It is God, that hath given me this shape, this sound:" yea, the very mute fishes are, in their very silence, vocal in magnifying the infinite wisdom and power of him that made them, and placed them in those watery habitations: 'Let every thing that hath breath,' saith the Psalmist, 'praise the Lord.'[3] Yea, the

[1] Cant. v. 3. [2] Psalm. xix. 1, 2. [3] Cl. 6.

very winds whistle, and the sea roars out the praise of the Almighty, who both raises and allays them at pleasure. What a shame were it for man, to whom alone God hath given an understanding heart, a nimble tongue, and articulate language wherein he can express his rational thoughts, to be wanting to this so universal devotion, and to be as insensible of the great works of God, as the ground that he treads upon! If others shall be thus unthankfully dumb, yet, 'Praise thou the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. While I live, will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises to my God, whilst I have any being.'[1] But alas, Lord, thou knowest I cannot so much as will to praise thee, without thee: do thou fill my heart with holy desires, and my mouth with songs of thanksgiving.

XV.

It may seem a strange errand upon which our Saviour tells us he came into the world: 'I am come to send fire on the earth.'[2] When the two fervent disciples would have had fire sent down from heaven upon but a Samaritan village, our Saviour rebuked them, and told them they knew not of what spirit they were; yet here he makes it his own business to send fire on earth. Alas, may we think, we have fire too much already! How happy were it rather, if the fire which is kindled in the world were well quenched! And what is the main drift of the Prince of Darkness, but fire? if not to send fire down from heaven upon the inhabitants of the earth; yet, to send the in-

[1] Psalm cxlvi. 1, 2. [2] Luke xii. 49.

habitants of the earth down to the fire of hell. As then we find divers kinds of material fire—celestial, elementary, domestic, artificial, natural; so there is no less variety of spiritual fires. It was in fiery, cloven tongues, wherein the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in their Pentecost;[1] and even this fire, did our Saviour come to send down on the earth.[2] 'Thy word was in me as fire,'[3] saith the prophet; and 'Did not our hearts burn within us,' said the two disciples, in their walk to Emmaus, 'while he talked with us?'[4] this fire he also came to send. Heavenly love and holy zeal are fire: 'Many waters cannot quench love.'[5] 'My zeal hath consumed me,' saith the Psalmist. And these fires our Saviour came to send into the hearts of men. Holy thoughts are no other than the beams of celestial fire: 'My heart was hot within me: while I was musing, the fire burned;' and these we know he sends: 'He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire;'[6] these he sends forth to the earth, 'to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation.'[7] Besides these, afflictions and persecutions are fire: 'We have passed through fire and water:' 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as if some strange thing had happened to you;'[8] and even these are of his sending: 'The Lord hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundation thereof.'[9] There is no evil in the city, but the Lord hath done it: 'The Lord hath done that, which he had devised: he hath

[1] Acts, ii. 3. [2] John, xvi. 7. [3] Jer. v. 14.
[4] Luke, xxiv. 32. [5] Cant. viii. 7.
[6] Psalm, cxix. 139; xxxix. 3; civ. 4. Heb. i. 7.
[7] Heb. i. 14. [8] Psalm lxvi. 12. 1 Peter, iv. 12.
[9] Lam. iv. 11.

thrown down, and not pitied.'[1] But this expression of our Saviour goes yet deeper, and alludes to the effect of separation which follows upon the fire of our trial. When the lump of ore is put into the furnace, the fire tries the pure metal from the dross, and makes an actual division of the one from the other: so doth Christ by his Word and Spirit. Even he, that is the Prince and God of Peace, comes to set division in the world. Surely, there are holy quarrels, worthy of his engagement; for as the flesh lusteth and warreth against the spirit, so the spirit fightest against the flesh; and this duel may well beseem God for the author, and the Son of God for the setter of it: these second blows make a happy fray. Nothing is more properly compared, than discord, to fire.[2] This, Christ (the first thing he does) sets in every heart: there is all quietness, secure ease, and self-contentment in the soul, till Christ come there. How should it be other, when Satan sways all without resistance? But, when once Christ offers to enter, there are straight civil wars in the soul betwixt the old man and the new; and it fares with the heart, as with a house divided in itself, wherein the husband and the wife are at variance: nothing is to be heard but unquiet janglings, open brawlings, secret opposition; the household takes part, and professes a mutual vexation. This spiritual self-division, wherever it is, though it be troublesome, yet it is cordial. It puts the soul into the state of Rebekah's womb; which, barren, yielded no pain, but when an Esau and Jacob were conceived and struggling within, yielded for the time no ease;

[1] Lam. ii. 17. [2] Judges, ix. 20.

yet this was that which caused her just joy, that she had not so much children as nations in her womb: even so the trouble of this inward conflict is abundantly requited with the joy of this assurance, That now Christ is come into our soul, and is working his own desired ends in and upon us. Let vain and sensual hearts please themselves in their inward peace and calmness—there cannot be a greater sign of gracelessness and disfavour of God: 'When they shall say peace, peace, then shall come upon them sudden destruction.' The old word was, "No safety in war:" here, it is contrary. It is this intestine war of the heart, with fire and sword to our corruptions, that must bring us true rest for the present; and hereafter, eternal peace and happiness. Now, Lord, since it is thy desire that this fire should be kindled, kindle thou and enflame my heart with a fervant desire and endeavour, that this thy desire may be accomplished in me. Set me at war with myself, that I may be at peace with thee.

XVI.

In all that we have to do with God, he justly requires and expects from us an awful disposition of heart towards his infiniteness. Hereupon it was that he delivered his law in thunder, fire, smoke, and all dreadful magnificence; and when upon the same day he would send down his Spirit for the propogation of the gospel, it was done with an astonishing majesty; with a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and with the apparition of cloven and fiery tongues.[1] And as it was thus

[1] Acts ii. 2, 3.

in the descent of the Holy Ghost in the miraculous gifts, so it is in the sanctifying graces; seldom ever doth God by them seize upon the heart, but with a vehement concussion going before. That of St. Paul's conversion was extraordinary and miraculous: but in some degree, it is thus in every soul; we are struck down first, and are made sensible of our spiritual blindness, ere our full call can be accomplished. As it was with Elijah in the Mount of Horeb, there came first a strong wind that tore the rocks and mountains, and after that an earthquake, then a fire, before the still small voice; so it is usually in our breasts, ere the comfortable voice of God's Spirit speak to our hearts: there must be some blustering and flashes of the law. It is our honour and his favour that we are allowed to love God: it is our duty to fear him. We may be too familiar in our love: we cannot be too awful in our fear.

XVII.

All valuations of these outward things are arbitrary, according to the opinion of their pleasure or their rarity, or the necessity of their use. Did not men's minds set a price upon metals, what were they better than some other entrails of the earth, or one better than the other? If by public law the mint were ordained to be only supplied by our stannaries, how currently would they pass for more precious than silver mines. To an Indian, a bracelet of worthless beads is estimated above his gold; a hungry Esau values a mess of pottage above his birth-right. In the siege of Samaria an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and a cab of dove's-dung for five pieces.[1] We have

[1] 2 Kings vi. 25.

heard that those of Angola have valued a dog at the price of many slaves. In all these earthly commodities, the market rises and falls, according to conceit and occasion; neither is there any intrinsical and settled worth in any of them: only spiritual things, as virtue and grace, are good in themselves, and so carry their infinite value in them that they make their owner absolutely rich and happy. When, therefore, I see a rich man hugging his bags and admiring his wealth, I look upon that man with pity, as knowing the poorness of that pelf wherein he placeth his felicity; neither can I behold him with other eyes than those wherewith a discreet European sees a savage Indian priding himself in those trifles which our children have learned to contemn. On the other side, when I see a man rich in the endowments of mind, well fraught with knowledge, eminent in goodness, and truly gracious, I shall rise up to that man, how homely soever his outside be, as the most precious and excellent piece which this world can afford.

XVIII.

Should I but see an angel, I should look, with Manoah, to die no other death than the sight of that glory; and yet even that angel is fain to hide his face, as not able to behold the infinite majesty of God his Creator. When Moses did but talk with God in the mount for forty days, his face did so shine, that the Israelites could not look upon the lustre of his countenance; even the very presence of the Divine Majesty not only hath, but communicates, glory. Lord, that I could see but some glimpse of the reflection of those glorious beams of thine upon my soul! how happy should

I be in this vision, whose next degree is perfectly beatifical!

XIX.

As good, so evil is apt to be communicative of itself; and this so much more as it meets with subjects more capable of evil than good. The breath of a plague-sick man taints the air round about him; yea, the very sight of blear eyes infects the sound, and one yawning mouth stretcheth many jaws. How many have we known, that have been innocent in their retiredness, miserably debauched with lewd conversation. Next to being good, is, to consort with the virtuous. It is the most merciful improvement of a holy power to separate the precious from the vile; it is the highest praise of a constant goodness for a Lot to be righteous in the midst of Sodom.

XX.

We are all apt to put off the blame of our miscarriages from ourselves. Even in paradise we did so: 'It was the woman,' saith Adam: 'It was the serpent,' saith the woman. How have we heard fond gamesters cast the blame of their ill luck upon the standers by, which intermeddled nothing but by a silent eye-sight. So the idolatrous pagans of old, though flagitiously wicked, yet could impute their public judgments to none but the Christians, whose only innocence was their protection from utter ruin. So foolishly partial doth our self-love render us to our own demerits, that all are guilty save ourselves. Yea, rather than we will want shifts, our very stars shall be blamed, which are no more accessary to our harms, than our eyes are to

the eclipses of their most eminent lights. As, on the contrary, we are ready to arrogate unto ourselves those blessings which the mere bounty of divine providence hath cast upon us; whereto we could not contribute so much as a hand to receive them, but by the mercy of the giver. It cannot be well with me till I have learned to correct this palpable injustice in both; challenging to myself all my errors and guilt of sufferings, and yielding to God the praise of his own free and gracious benificence.

XXI.

How profitable and beneficial a thing is affliction, especially to some dispositions more than other! I see some trees that will not thrive unless their roots be laid bare; unless, besides pruning, their bodies be gashed and sliced: others, that are too luxuriant, except divers of their blossoms be seasonably pulled off, yield nothing. I see too rank corn, if it be not timely eaten down, may yield something to the barn, but little to the granary. I see some full bodies that can enjoy no health without strong evacuations, blood-lettings, fontinels. Such is the condition of our spiritual part: it is a rare soul that can be kept in any constant order without these smarting remedies—I confess mine cannot; how wild had I run if the rod had not been over me! Every man can say he thanks God for ease; for me, I bless God for my troubles.

XXII.

When I consider what an insensible atom man is, in comparison of the whole body of the earth; and what a mere centre-point the earth is, in comparison of the vast circumference of heaven; and

what an almost infinite distance there is betwixt this point the earth, and that large circle the firmament; and, therewithal, think of the innumerable number and immense greatness of those heavenly luminaries; I cannot but apprehend how improbable it is that those stars should, at such a distance, distinguish betwixt one man and another, betwixt one limb of the same body and another, betwixt one spot of earth and another, and in so great a mixture and confusion of influences should give any distinct intimation of particular events in nature, and much more of mere contingencies of arbitrary affairs. As for the moon, by reason of her vicinity to the earth and sensible predominance over moisture, and for the sun, the great magazine of light and heat, I acknowledge their powerful but impartial operations upon this whole globe of earth and waters, and every part of it, not without just wonder and astonishment; the other stars may have their several virtues and effects, but their marvellous remoteness, and my undiscernible nothingness, may seem to forbid any certain intelligence of their distinct workings upon me.[1] But whether these glorious lights give or take any notice of such an imperceptible mite as I, sure I am there is great great reason I should take notice of them — of their beauteous lustre, of their wonderful magnitude, of their regular motion, and be transported with admiration of that omnipotent power, wisdom, providence, which created this goodly and mighty host of heaven, and guides them in their constant march without the least deviation from their first setting

[1] The popularity of astrological studies in our author's time, accounts for these repeated allusions to the imaginary influence of the *stars*.—Ed.

out to the last moment of their final conflagration. Oh! the narrowness of my wretched heart, that affords not room enough for wonder at that which I cannot but see.

XXIII.

It becomes not us to be niggardly where our Saviour intends bounty. How glad should we be rather to ampliate the benefit of the great work of our Redeemer. But surely I cannot see upon what warrant that favour is grounded, that enlargeth the fruit of Christ's redemption to the angels; the good needed it not, the evil were not capable of it; only mankind was captived and redeemable by that invaluable ransom. Doubtless those blessed spirits have their part in the joy and gratulation of the infinite mercy of our deliverance; for if they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner, what triumph do we think there is in heaven at the universal redemption of all believers! The propriety of this favour hath reason to engage us so much the more. Lord, thy mercy is free and boundless; thou wouldst pass by the lapsed angels, and leave them in their sin and their chains, and only rescue miserable men out of their hell. Oh! for a heart that might be in some measure answerable to so infinite mercy: and that might be no less captived to thy love than it is freed by thy redemption.

XXIV.

Men do commonly wrong themselves with a groundless expectation of good, fore-promising to themselves all fair terms in their proceedings, and all happy success in their issue, boding nothing to themselves but what they wish. Even the man

after God's own heart could say, 'In my prosperity I said, tush, I shall never be removed:'[1] wherein their misreckoning makes their disappointment so much the more grievous. Had not David made such account of the strength and stability of his mountain, it could not have so much troubled him to have it levelled with the plain. On the contrary, the evils which we look for, fall so much the less heavily, by how much we are fore-prepared for their entertainment. Whatever by-accidents I may meet withal besides, I have two fixed matches that I must inevitably encounter with, age and death: the one is attended with many inconveniences, the other with much horror. Let me not flatter myself with hopes of jollity and ease. My comforts for heaven shall, I trust, never fail me; but for the present world, it shall be well with me if I can, without too much difficulty, scramble out of the necessary miseries of life, and without too much sorrow, crawl to my grave.

XXV.

Heaven hath many tongues that talk of it, more eyes to behold it, but few hearts that rightly affect it. Ask any Christian especially, whom ye shall meet with, he will tell you, thither he shapes his course, there he hath pitched his hopes, and would think himself highly wronged by that man who should make doubt of either his interest or speed; but if we shall cast our eyes upon the lives of men, or they reflect their eyes upon their own bosoms, the hypocrisy will too palpably discover itself; for surely which way soever the faces look, the hands

[1] Psalm xxx. 6.

and feet of the most men move hellward. If malice, fraud, cruelty, oppression, injustice, excess, uncleanness, pride, contention, covetousness, lies, heresies, blasphemies, disobedience, be the way thither, woe is me, how many walk in that wide and open road to destruction! But even there, where the heart pretends to innocence, let a man strictly examine his own affections, he shall find them so deeply earthed, that he shall be forced to confess his claim to heaven is but fashionable.[1] Ask thyself but this one question (O man, whatsoever thou art, ask it seriously:) "Might I this very hour go to heaven, am I willing and desirous to make a present change of this life for a better?" and tell me sincerely, what answer thou receivest from thine own heart. Thy judgment cannot but tell thee that the place is a thousand times better; that the condition would be infinitely advantageous, to exchange baseness for glory, misery for blessedness, time for eternity, a living death for a life immortal. If thou do now fumble, and shuffle, and demur upon the resolution, be convinced of thine own worldliness and infidelity; and know, that if thy heart had as much of heaven as thy tongue, thou couldst not but say, with the chosen vessel, 'I desire to depart hence and to be with Christ, which is far better.'[2]

XXVI.

There is no earthly pleasure whereof we shall not soon grow weary, and be as willing to intermit as ever we were to entertain it, and if the use of it continue, the very frequency makes it disregarded; so as that which at first we esteemed rare and pre-

[1] Counterfeit.—Ed. [2] Phil. i. 23.

cious, is now looked upon as common and despicable; and if it be such as that our impetuous affection is too much transported with a present fruition, we are so much the more distempered with the loss. On the contrary, those painful yokes which at the first imposing seemed insupportable, grow tolerable by custom and long acquaintance: so as, I know not how it comes to pass, that time hath a contrary power both to aggravate and lighten evils. Those pleasures are only worthy to carry our hearts, which are measured by no less than eternity; and those pains most justly formidable, which know neither end nor remission.

XXVII.

The nearer our Saviour drew to his glory, the more humility he expressed. His followers were first his servants, and he their master; then his disciples, and he their teacher; soon after, they were his friends, and he theirs; straightways after his resurrection and entrance into his immortal condition, they were his brethren: 'Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father;' lastly, they are incorporated into him, and made partakers of his glory, 'That they also may be one with us,' saith he; 'I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.'[1] O Saviour, was this done for the depressing of thyself, or for the exaltation of us, or rather for both? How couldst thou more depress thyself, than thus to match thyself with us poor wretched creatures? How couldst thou more exalt

[1] John, xiii. 16; xv. 8, 14; xx. 17; xvii. 21, 22, 23.

ús, than to raise us unto this entireness with thee, the all-glorious and eternal Son of God? How should we learn of thee to improve our highest advancement to our deepest humility; and so to regard each other, that when we are greatest we should be least!

XXVIII.

How apt are we to misconstrue the spirit of God to our own disadvantage! While the blessed apostle bids us to 'work out' our 'salvation with fear and trembling,' he doth not bid us to work it out with doubt and distrust. It is the Psalmist's charge, that we should 'serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling:'[1] so as there is a fear without diffidence, and a trembling that may consist with joy. Trembling is an effect of fear; but this fear which we must affect is reverential, not slavish, not distrustful. Indeed, when we look upon ourselves, and consider our own frailties and corruptions, and God's infinite justice, we have too just cause of doubt and dejection, yea, were it not for better helps, of utter despair; but when we cast up our eyes to the power of him that hath undertaken for us, and the faithfulness of him that hath promised, and the sure mercies of him that hath begun his good work in us, we can fear with confidence, and rejoice in our trembling. For what are our sins, to his mercies; our unworthiness, to his infinite merits; our weaknesses, to his omnipotence? I will therefore so distrust myself, that I will be steadfastly confident in the God of my salvation; I will so tremble before the glorious ma-

[1] Psalm, ii. 11.

jesty of my God, that I may not abate of the joy of his never-failing mercy.

XXIX.

What a large and open hand hath our God! How infinitely doth his bounty transcend, not the practice only, but the admiration of man! We think it well, if, upon often asking, we can receive small favours; if, after long delay, we can be gratified with a condescent; and, if we have received one courtesy, that is a bar to a second: whereas, our munificent God gives us, not only what we ask, but what we ask not, and therefore before we ask. Yea, it is he that gives us to ask; neither could we so much as crave good things, if he did not put into us those holy desires. Yea, he not only gives us blessings before we ask, but he gives us the best things, a right to eternal glory, before we are at all, yea, before the world was. And, as he prevents us in time, so he exceeds our thoughts in measure, giving us more than we ask: Rachel would have a son—God gives her two; Abraham sues that Ishmael may live—God gives him to prosper, and to be the father of many princes. Yet more, he gives us what we cannot ask: the dumb demoniac could not sue for himself; his very silence was vocal, and receives what he would, and could not request. Yea, lastly, which is the great improvement of his mercy, he gives us against our asking: our ignorance sues against ourselves, requiring hurtful things; he will not suffer our hearts and tongues to wrong us, but withholds what we unfitly crave, and gives us what we should, and do not crave; as the fond child cries to his father for a knife, he reaches him a spoon, that may feed and not hurt

him. O the ocean of divine bounty, boundless, bottomless! O our wretched unworthiness, if we be either niggardly to ourselves, in not asking blessings, or unthankful to our God in not acknowledging them.

XXX.

Infidelity and faith look both through the same perspective glass, but at contrary ends. Infidelity looks through the wrong end of the glass; and therefore sees those objects which are near afar off, and makes great things little, diminishing the greatest spiritual blessings, and removing far from us threatened evils: faith looks at the right end; and brings the blessings that are far off in time close to our eye, and multiplies God's mercies, which, in a distance, lost their greatness. Thus the faithful saw his seed possessed of the promised land, when as yet he had no seed, nor was likely to have any; when the seed, which he should have, should not enjoy it till after four hundred years. Thus that good patriarch saw Christ's day, and rejoiced. Thus our first parent comforted himself, after his ejection out of paradise, with the foresight of that blessed seed of the woman, which should be exhibited almost four thousand years after. Still, and ever, faith is like itself. What use were there of that grace, if it did not fetch home to my eye things future and invisible? That this dissolved body shall be raised out of the dust, and enlivened with this very soul wherewith it is now animated, and both of them put into a condition eternally glorious, is as clearly represented to my soul in this glass as if it were already done. 'Faithful is he that hath promised, which will also do it.'

XXXI.

Who can think other than with scorn of that base and unworthy conceit which hath been entertained by some, that our Saviour lived here on earth upon alms? He that vouchsafed to take upon him the shape of a servant, would have hated to take upon him the trade of a beggar: service is a lawful calling, beggary not so. He that gave life to all creatures, could take a maintenance from them without asking. He that did command the fish to bring the tribute money for himself and his disciples, and could multiply a few loaves and fishes for the relief of thousands, could rather raise a sustenance to himself and his than beg it. But here was neither need nor cause; even ordinary means failed not; many wealthy followers, who had received cures and miraculous deliverances, besides heavenly doctrine from him, ministered to him of their substance.[1] Neither was this out of charity, but out of duty: in the charge which he gave to his disciples, when he sent them by pairs to preach abroad, he tells them the labourer is worthy of his wages; and can we think this rule doth not much more hold concerning himself? Had not himself and his family been furnished with a meet stock raised from hence, what purse was it which Judas bore? and how could he be a thief in his office, if his bags were empty? He, therefore, that could say, 'It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive,' certainly would not choose, when it was in his power, rather to receive than give. 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;'

[1] Luke, viii. 2, 3.

and he distributes it as he pleaseth amongst the children of men. For me, I hope I shall have the grace to be content with whatsoever share shall fall to my lot; but my prayer shall be, that I may beg of none but God.

XXXII.

What a madness it is in us, to presume on our interest in God's favour for the securing of our sinfulness from judgment! The angels were deeper in it than we mortals can ever hope to be in these houses of clay, yet, long since, are ugly devils; and they who enjoyed the liberty of the glorious heavens, are now reserved in everlasting chains of darkness. And, if we look down upon earth, what darling had God in the world but Israel? This was his firstborn, his lot, his inheritance; of whom he said, 'Here I have a delight to dwell.' And now, where is it? Oh, the woeful desolations of that select people! What is it to tell of the suffosion[1] of her vineyards;[2] vastation of her tents;[3] the devouring of her land;[4] demolition of walls;[5] breaking down altars, burning of cities, spoiling of houses, dashing in pieces their children, ravishing their wives;[6] killing of their priests;[7] eating of their own children of but a span long;[8] and a thousand such woeful symptoms of war? The Psalmist hath said a word for all, (in a just, but contrary sense,) 'Destructions are come to a perpetual end:' what destruction can be more, when there is no Israel? How is that wretched nation

[1] Digging up.
[2] Psalm, lxxx. 13.
[3] Jer. iv. 20.
[4] Isaiah, i. 7.
[5] Psalm, lxxxix. 40.
[6] Isaiah, xxvii. 9; xiii. 16.
[7] Psalm, lxxviii. 64.
[8] Lam. ii. 20.

vanished, no man knows whither! So, as it was Jezebel's curse, that nothing was left whereof it could be said, 'this was Jezebel;' so, there is not one piece of a man left in all the world of whom we can say, 'This was one of the tribes of Israel.'[1] As for those famous churches which were, since that, honoured with the preaching and pens of the blessed apostles, where are they now to be looked for, but amongst the rubbish of our cursed Mahometism? Oh, that we could not be high-minded, but fear!

XXXIII.

What a woeful conversion is here! The sting of death is sin, and the sting of sin is death; both meet in man, to make him perfectly miserable. Death could not have stung us, no, could not have been at all, if it had not been for sin; and sin, though in itself extremely heinous, yet were not so dreadful and horrible if it were not attended with death. How do we owe ourselves to the mercy of a Saviour that hath freed us from the evil of both! having pulled out the sting of death, which is sin, that it cannot hurt us; and having taken such order with the sting of sin, which is death, that, instead of hurting, it shall turn beneficial to us. Lord, into what a safe condition hast thou put us! If neither sin nor death can hurt us, what should we fear?

[1] The good bishop has here coloured his pathetic portrait too highly for literal truth. Israel, though degraded, exists; and is undoubtedly reserved for a glorious restoration. See Romans, xi.—Ed.

XXXIV.

How unjustly hath the presumption of blasphemous cavillers been wont to cast the envy of their condemnation merely upon the absolute will of an unrespective power! as if the damnation of the creature were only of a supreme will, not of a just merit. The very name of justice convinces them: a punitive justice cannot but suppose an offence. It is not for us to rack the brains and strain the heart-strings of plain honest Christians, with the subtleties of distinctions, of a negative and positive reprobation, of causes and consequences—truths meet for the schools; it is enough that all Christian divines, the synods both of Dort and Trent, agree in this, That never man is, was, can be miserable, but for sin; yea, for his own sin. The prophet tells us so in terms: 'Why is the living man sorrowful? man suffereth for his sin.'[1] Nothing can be more true than that of Bildad the Shuhite, 'Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man.'[2] Thy perdition is of thyself, O Israel.' It is no less than rank blasphemy to make God the author of sin. 'Thou art the God, that hast no pleasure in wickedness; neither shall any evil dwell with thee,'[3] saith the Psalmist. Our sin is our own; and the wages of sin is death; he that doth the work earns the wages. So then, the righteous God is cleared both of our sin and our death: only his justice pays us what we will needs deserve. 'Have I any pleasure at all,' saith he, 'that the wicked should die; and not that he should return from his ways and live? wherefore return ye, and live.'[4] What a

[1] Lam. iii. 39. [2] Job. viii. 20. [3] Psalm, v. 4.
[4] Ezek. xviii. 23, 32.

wretched thing is a wilful sinner, that will needs be guilty of his own death! Nothing is more odious amongst men than for a man to be a felon of himself: besides the forfeiture of his estate, Christian burial is denied him; and he is cast forth into the highway, with a stake pitched through his body, so as every passenger that sees that woeful monument, is ready to say, "There lies the carcase, but where is the soul?" But so much more heinous is the self-felony of a wilful sinner, because it is immediately acted upon the soul; and carries him, with pleasure, in the ways of an eternal death. O Lord, 'cleanse thou me from my secret faults: keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me.'[1]

XXXV.

We are wont to say, That we ought to give even the devil his due; and surely, it is possible for us to wrong that malignant spirit, in casting upon him those evils which are not properly his. It is true that he is the tempter, and both injects evil motions, and draws them forth into act; but yet, all ill is not immediately his; we have enough besides of our own. 'Every man,' saith St. James, 'is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'[2] Lo, both the lust and the seducement are our own; the sin is ours; the death ours. There are, indeed, diabolical suggestions, which are immediately cast into us by that wicked one; but there are carnal temptations, that are

[1] Psalm, xix. 12, 13. [2] James, i. 14, 15.

raised out of our own corrupt nature: these need not his immediate hand. He was the main agent in our depravation; but, being once depraved, we can act evil of ourselves. And, if Satan be the father of sin, our will is the mother; and sin is the cursed issue of both. He could not make our sin without ourselves: we concur to our own undoing. It was the charge of the apostle, that we should 'not give place to the devil:' lo, he could not take it, unless we gave it: our will betrays us to his tyranny; in vain shall we cry out of the malice and fraud of wicked spirits, while we nourish their accomplices in our bosoms.

XXXVI.

I cannot but think, with what unspeakable joy old Simeon died, when, after long waiting for the consolation of Israel, he had now seen the Lord's Christ; when I hear him say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' Methinks I should see his soul ready to fly out of his mouth, in a heavenly ravishment; and even then upon its wing towards its glory; for now his eyes saw, and his arms embraced, in God's salvation his own, in Israel's glory his own. How gladly doth he now see death, when he hath the Lord of Life in his bosom! Or how can he wish to close up his eyes with any other object? Yet, when I have seriously considered it, I cannot see wherein our condition comes short of his. He saw the child Jesus but in his swathing bands, when he was but now entering upon the great work of our redemption; we see him after the full accomplishment of it, gloriously triumphing in heaven.

He saw him but buckling on his armour, and entering into his lists: we see him victorious: 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save?' He could only say, 'To us a child is born, to us a son is given;'[1] we can say, 'Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men.'[2] It is true the difference is, he saw his Saviour with bodily eyes; we with mental; but the eyes of our faith are no less sure and unfailing than those of sense. Lord, why should not I, whose eyes have no less seen thy salvation, say, Now let thy servant depart, not in peace only, but in a joyful sense of my instant glory?

XXXVII.

When I think on my Saviour in his agony and on his cross, my soul is so clouded with sorrow, as if it would never be clear again; those bloody drops, and those dreadful ejaculations, methinks should be past all reach of comfort; but when I see his happy eluctation out of these pangs, and hear him cheerfully rendering his spirit into the hands of his Father; when I find him trampling upon his grave, attended with glorious angels, and ascending in the chariot of a cloud to his heaven; I am so elevated with joy, as that I seem to have forgotten there was ever any cause of grief in those sufferings. I could be passionate to think, O Saviour, of thy bitter and ignominious death; and,

[1] Isaiah, lxiii. 1; ix. 6. [2] Psalm, lxviii. 18.

most of all, of thy vehement strugglings with thy Father's wrath for my sake; but thy conquest and glory takes me off, and calls me to hallelujahs of joy and triumph: 'Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him, that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb, for ever and ever.'[1]

XXXVIII.

It is not hard to observe, that the more holy any person is, the more he is afflicted with others' sin. Lot vexed his righteous soul with the unclean conversation of the Sodomites; David's eye gushed out rivers of water, because men kept not the law. Those that can look with dry and undispleased eyes upon another's sin, never truly mourned for their own: had they abhorred sin, as sin, the offence of a God would have been grievous to them in whomsoever. It is a godless heart that doth not find itself concerned in God's quarrel, and that can laugh at that which the God of heaven frowns at. My soul is nearest to me—my sorrow, therefore, for my sin must begin at home; but it may not rest there; from thence it shall diffuse itself all the world over: 'Who is offended, and I burn not?'[2] Who offendeth, and I weep not?

XXXIX.

The world little considers the good advantage that is made of sins. Surely the whole church of God hath reason to bless God for Thomas his unbelief: not in the act, which was odious, after so good assurances, but in the issue. His doubt proves our evidence; and his confession, after his touch

[1] Rev. v. 13. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 29.

had convinced him, was more noble than his incredulity was shameful. All his attendance upon Christ had not taught him so much divinity as this one touch. Often had he said, 'My Lord,' but never 'My God,' till now. Even Peter's confession, though rewarded with the change of his name, came short of this. The flame that is beaten down by the blast of the bellows, rises higher than otherwise it would; and the spring water that runs level in the plain, yea if it fall low, it will therefore rise high: the shaken tree roots the deeper. Not that we should sin that grace may abound, God forbid; he can never hope to be good, that will be therefore ill, that he may be the better; but, that our holy zeal should labour to improve our miscarriages to our spiritual gain, and the greater glory of that majesty whom we have offended. To be bettered by grace it is no mastery; but to raise more holiness out of sin, is a noble imitation of that holy God, who brings light out of darkness, life out of death.

XL.

Every man best knows his own complaints: we look upon the outsides of many whom we think happy, who, in the mean time, are secretly wrung with the inward sense of their own concealed sorrows; and, under a smooth and calmed countenance, smother many a tempest in their bosom; there are those whose faces smile, while their conscience gripes them closely within; there are those that can dissemble their poverty and domestic vexations, reserving their sighs till their back be turned; that, can pick their teeth abroad, when they are fasting and hungry at home; and many a one forces a song when his heart is heavy. No doubt,

Naomi made many a short meal after her return to Bethlehem, yet did not whine to her great kindred, in a bemoaning of her want; and good Hannah bit in many a grief, which her insulting rival might not see. On the contrary, there are many whom we pity as miserable, that laugh in their sleeve, and applaud themselves in their secret felicity; and would be very loth to exchange conditions with those that commiserate them: a ragged cynic likes himself, at least as well as a great Alexander; the mortified Christian, that knows both worlds, looks with a kind of contented scorn upon the proud gallant that contemns him; as feeling that heaven within him, which the other is not capable to believe. It is no judging of men's real estate by their semblance; nor valuing others' worth by our own rate. And for ourselves, if we have once laid sure grounds of our own inward contentment and happiness, it matters not greatly if we be misknown of the world.

XLI.

For one man to give titles to another, is ordinary; but for the great God to give titles to a poor wretched man, is no less than wonderful. Thus doth the Lord to Job: 'There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man.' Oh! what must he needs be, in whom his Maker glories! Lo! who would have looked for a saint in so obscure a corner of the east, and in so dark a time, before ever the law gave light to the world? yet, even then, the land of Uz yields a Job. No time, no place can be any bar to an infinite mercy. Even this while, for ought I see, the sun shined more bright in Midian than in Goshen. God's

election will be sure to find out his own, any where out of hell; and if they could be there, even there also. Amongst all those idolatrous heathen, Job is perfect and upright: his religion and integrity is so much the more glorious, because it is so ill-neighbourd—as some rich diamond is set off by a dark foil. Oh! the infinite goodness of the Almighty, that picks out some few grains out of the large chaff-heap of the world, which he reserves for the granary of a blessed immortality! 'It is not of him that willeth, nor in him that runneth; but of God that hath mercy.' We might well imagine, that such a sprig must sprout out of the stock of faithful Abraham. What other loins were likely to yield so holy an issue? And if his Sarah must be the mother of the promised seed, yet why might he not also raise a blessed seed from Keturah? The birth doth not always follow the belly: even this second brood yields an heir of his father's faith. It is said, that 'to the sons of the concubines Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away to the east.'[1] Surely, this son of the concubine carries away as rich a legacy of his father's grace, as ever was enjoyed by the son of the promise at home. The gifts that Abraham gave to Midian, were nothing to those gifts which the God of Abraham gives to the son of Midian; who 'was perfect and upright, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.' I perceive the holy and wise God meant to make this man a pattern, as of patience, so of all heavenly virtues: he could not be fit for that use if he were not exquisite; and what can be wanting to that man, of

[1] Gen. xxv. 6.

whom God holily boasts that he is perfect? And now, what metal is so fit to challenge the fire of affliction, as this pure gold? and who is so fit a match for the great adversary, as this champion of God? Never had he been put upon so hard a combat, if God had not well known both the strength that he had given him, and the happy success of his conflict. Little doth that good man know what wager is laid on his head, but strongly encounters all his trials. The Sabeans have bereft him of his oxen; the Chaldees of his camels; the fire from heaven, of his sheep; the tempest, of his children; Satan, of his health: and had not his wife been left to him for his greatest cross, and his friends for his further tormentors, I doubt whether they had escaped. Lo, there sits the great potentate of the east, naked and forlorn in the ashes; as destitute of all comforts, as full of painful boils and botches, scraping his loathsome hide with a potsherd; yet, even in that woeful posture, possessing his soul in patience, maintaining his innocence, justifying his Maker, cheering himself in his Redeemer, and happily triumphing over all his miseries; and, at last, made the great mirror of divine bounty to all generations. Now must Job pray for his friendly persecutors; and is so high in favour with God, that it is made an argument of extreme wrath against Israel, that though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in the land, they should deliver none but their own souls.[1] O God! this saint could not have had this strength of invincible patience without thee; thou, that rewardest it in him, didst bestow it upon him; it is thy great mercy to crown thine own works

[1] Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.

in us: thy gifts are free; thou canst fortify even my weak soul with the same powers: strengthen me with the same grace, and impose what thou wilt.

XLII.

As it shall be once in glory, so it is in grace; there are degrees of it. The apostle, that said of his auditors, they have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, did not say they have received the Holy Ghost as much as we. We know the apostles had so much as to give it to others: none besides them could do so. It is a happy thing to have any quantity of true sanctifying grace at all: every drop of water is water, and every grain of gold is gold; every measure of grace is precious. But who is there, that when he is dry would take up with one drop of liquor, when he might have more? or, if covetously minded, would sit down content with one dram of gold? In such cases, a little doth but draw on a desire for more. It is strange to see that in all other commodities we desire a fulness; if God give us fruit of our bodies, it contents us not to have an imperfect child, but we wish it may have the full shape and proportion: and when God hath answered us in that, we do not rest in the integrity of parts, but desire that it may attain to a fulness of understanding and stature, and then, lastly, to a fulness of age. We would have full dishes, full cups, full coffers, full barns, a fulness of all things, save the best of all, which is the Holy Ghost. Any measure of spiritual grace contents us, so as we are ready to say with Esau, 'I have enough, my brother.' There is a sinful kind of contentation, wherewith many fashionable Christians suffer themselves to be beguiled, to the utter

undoing of their souls; for hereupon they grow utterly careless to get what they think they have already: who cares to eat, that is full crammed? And by this means they live and die graceless; for had they ever tasted how sweet the Lord is in the graces of his Holy Spirit, they could never think they had enough; and while they do think so, they are utterly uncapable of either having or desiring more. As there is a sinful, so there is a holy covetousness, which the more it hath the more it affects. Lord, make me thus covetous, and I cannot choose but be rich.

XLIII.

What a marvellous familiarity was this which Moses had with God, that 'the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend!'[1] and yet more, that Moses so spake to God! What a bold and high request was that which Moses made to God: 'I beseech thee show me thy glory;' that is, as it is there interpreted, 'thy face!' that face which no man might see and live. Lo; God hath immediately before spoken to Moses, even to his face, out of the cloudy pillar: that doth not satisfy his holily ambitious soul; but as he heard the voice, so he must see the face, of the Almighty. That cloudy pillar did sufficiently represent unto him the presence of the great God of Israel: yet still he sues for a sight of his glory. This is no pattern for flesh and blood—far be it from our thoughts to aspire so high. 'Thy face, O God, will we seek:' but in thy blessed ordinances, not in thy glorious and incomprehensible essence. It is not for me as yet to presume so far as to desire

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 11.

to see that infinite light which thou art, or that light wherewith thou art clothed, or that light inaccessible wherein thou dwellest; only now show me the light of thy countenance in grace, and prepare my soul for that light of glory when I shall see as I am seen.

XLIV.

In the waters of life, the divine Scriptures, there are shallows and there are deeps; shallows where the lamb may wade, and deeps where the elephant may swim. If we be not wise to distinguish, we may easily miscarry: he that can wade over the ford cannot swim through the deep, and if he mistake the passage he drowns. What infinite mischief hath arisen to the church of God from the presumption of ignorant and unlettered men, that have taken upon them to interpret the most obscure Scriptures, and pertinaciously defended their own sense! How contrary is this to all practice, in whatsoever vocation. In the tailor's trade, every man can stitch a seam, but every man cannot cut out a garment; in the sailor's art, every one may be able to pull at a cable, but every one cannot guide the helm; in the physician's profession, every gossip can give some ordinary receipts upon common experience, but to find the nature of the disease, and to prescribe proper remedies from the just grounds of art, is proper to the professors of that science, and we think it absurd and dangerous to allow every ignorant mountebank to practice: in matter of law, every plain countryman knows what belongs to distraining, impounding, replevying; but to give sound counsel to a client in a point of difficulty, to draw firm conveyances, to plead effec-

tually, and to give sound judgment in the hardest cases, is for none but barristers and benchers: and shall we think it safe that in divinity, which is the mistress of all sciences, and in matters which may concern the eternal safety of the soul, every man should take upon him to shape his own coat, to steer his own way, to give his own dose, to put and adjudge his own case? The old word was, That artists are worthy to be trusted in their own trade. Wherefore hath God given to men skill in arts and tongues? Wherefore do the aptest wits spend their times and studies from their infancy upon these sacred employments, if men altogether inexpert in all the grounds, both of art and language, can be able to pass as sound a judgment in the depths of theological truths as they? How happy were it if we could all learn according to that word of the apostle, to keep ourselves within our own line! As Christians the Scriptures are ours; but to use, to enjoy, to read, to hear, to learn, to meditate, to practise, not to interpret according to our private conceit; for this faculty we must look higher: 'The priest's lips are to preserve knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.'[1]

XLV.

When we see the year in his prime and pride, decked with beautiful blossoms and all goodly varieties of flowers, cheered with the music of birds, and stated in a sweet and moderate temper of heat and cold, how glad we are that we have made so good an exchange for a hard and chilling

[1] Mal. ii. 7.

winter, and how ready we could be to wish that this pleasant and happy season might last all the year long! But herein, were our desires satisfied, we should wish to our own great disadvantage; for if the spring were not followed with an intention of summer's heat, those fruits, whose hopes we see in the bud and flower, could never come to any perfection; and even that succeeding fervour, if it should continue long, would be no less prejudicial to the health and life of all creatures; and if there were not a relaxation of that vigorous heat in autumn, so as the sap returns back into the root, we could never look to see but one year's fruit. And thus also it is spiritually; if our prosperity were not intermixed with vicissitudes of crosses, and if the lively beams of grace were not sometimes interchanged with cold desertions, we should never know what belongs to spiritual life. What should we do then, but be both patient of and thankful for our changes, and make no account of any constancy till we attain to the region of rest and blessedness?

XLVI.

What fools doth the devil make of those men, which would fain otherwise be accounted wise! Who would think that men could be so far forsaken of their reason, as to fall down before those stocks and stones which their own hands had carved? to guide their enterprises by the fond auguries of the flying, or posture, or noise of fowls, or the inspection of the entrails of beasts? to tie the confidence of their success to certain scrawls and characters, which themselves have devised? to read their own or others' fortunes in their hands or stars? to suffer themselves to be mocked with deceitful visions?

Neither are his spiritual delusions less gross and palpable. Wise Solomon speaks of 'the wickedness of folly;'[1] and we may no less truly invert it, The folly of wickedness. The fool, saith our Saviour, 'builds his house upon the sand,'[2] so as it may be washed away by the next waves: what other doth the foolish worldling, that builds all his hopes upon 'uncertain riches,'[3] 'momentary pleasures,'[4] 'deceitful favours.'[5] 'The fool,' saith Solomon, 'walketh in darkness;'[6] the sinner walks in the darkness of ignorance, through the works of darkness, to the pit of darkness. 'The fool,' saith the preacher, 'knowns not the way into the city;'[7] the worldling may perhaps hit the way through the golden gates of honour, or down to the mines of wealth, or to the flowery garden of pleasure; but the way of true peace he knows not; he no more knows the way to heaven than if there were none. 'The fool,' saith the psalmist, 'hath said in his heart, There is no God:' did not the wicked man say so, he durst not wilfully sin in the face of so mighty and dreadful an avenger. Lastly, the fool is apt to part with his patrimony for some gay toys; and how ready is the carnal heart to cast away the favour of God, the inheritance of heaven, the salvation of his soul, for these vain earthly trifles! Holy men are wont to pass with the world for God's fools: alas! how little do these censurers know to pass a true judgment of wisdom and folly! He that was rapt into the third heaven tells us, that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men;'[8] but this we

[1] Eccl. vii. 25.
[2] Matt. vii. 26.
[3] 1 Tim. vi. 17.
[4] Heb. xi. 25.
[5] Prov. xxxi. 30.
[6] Eccl. ii. 14.
[7] Ib. x. 15.
[8] 1 Cor. i. 25.

are sure of, that wicked men are the devil's fools, and that 'judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.'[1]

XLVII.

There are some things which are laudable in man, but cannot be incident unto God, as a bashful shamefacedness and holy fear; and there are some dispositions blame-worthy in men, which are yet, in a right sense, holily ascribed unto God; as unchangeableness and irrepentance. Attributes and qualities receive their limitations according to their meet subjects to which they belong, with this sure rule, That whatsoever may import an infinite purity and perfection we have reason to ascribe to our Maker; what may argue infirmity, misery, corruption, we have reason to take to ourselves. Neither is it otherwise in the condition of men; one man's virtue is another's vice: so boldness in a woman, bashfulness in an old man, bounty in a poor man, parsimony in the great, are as foully unbesceming, as boldness in a soldier, bashfulness in a child, bounty in the rich, parsimony in the poor, are justly commendable. It is not enough for us to know what is good in itself, but what is proper for us; else we may be blemished with that which is another's honour.

XLVIII.

It is easy to observe that there are five degrees of the digestion of our spiritual food. First, it is received into the cell of the ear, and there digested by a careful attention; then it is conveyed into

[1] Prov. xix. 29.

the brain, and there concocted by due meditation; from thence it is sent down into the heart, and digested by the affections; and from thence it is conveyed to the tongue, in conference and holy confession; and, lastly, it is thence transmitted to the hand, and there receives perfect digestion in our action and performance. And, as the life and health of the body cannot be maintained except the material food pass through all the degrees of bodily concoction, no more can the soul live and prosper in the want of any of those spiritual degrees of digestion; and, as where the food is perfectly concocted the body grows fat and vigorous, so it is with the soul where the spiritual repast is thus kindly digested. Were there not failings in all these degrees, the souls of men would not be so meagre and unthriving as they are. Some there are, that will not give so much as ear-room to the word of truth; such are willing recusants: others will admit it perhaps so far, but there let it rest; these are fashionable auditors: some others can be content to let it enter the brain, and take up some place in their thoughts and memories; these are speculative professors: some (but fewer) others let it down into their hearts, and there entertain it with secret liking, but hide it in their bosoms, not daring to make profession of it to the world; these are close Nicodemians: others take it into their mouths, and busy their tongues in holy chat, yet do nothing; these are formal discoursers. But, alas! how few are there whose hands speak louder than their tongues; that conscionably hear, meditate, affect, speak, do the work of their Maker and Redeemer!

XLIX.

Men that are in the same condition speed not always alike: Barabbas was a thief, murderer, seditionary, and deserved hanging no less than the two thieves that were crucified with our Saviour; yet he is dismissed, and they executed. And even of these two, as our Saviour said of the two women grinding at the mill, one was taken, the other refused: one went, before Peter, to paradise; the other went, before Judas, into hell. The providence and election of a God may make a difference: we have no reason, in the same crime, to presume upon a contrary issue: if that gracious hand shall exempt us from the common judgment of our consorts in evil, we have cause to bless his mercy; but if his just hand shall sweep us away in the company of our wicked consociates, we have reason to thank none but ourselves for our sufferings.

L.

How sweet a thing is revenge to us naturally! Even the very infant rejoices to see him beaten that hath angered him; and is ready, with his little hand, to give that stroke to the bystander which he would have with more force returned to the offender; and how many have we known, in mortal quarrels, cheerfully bleeding out their last drop when they have seen their enemy gasping and dying before them! This alone shows how much there is remaining in our bosom of the sting of that old serpent, who was a murderer from the beginning; delighting in death, and enjoying our torment: whereas, on the contrary, true grace is merciful, ready to forgive, apt to return good for evil,

to pray for our persecutors.[1] Nothing doth more clearly evince what spirit we are of, than our disposition in wrongs received: the carnal heart breathes nothing but revenge, and is straight wringing the sword out of the hands of him that hath said, 'Vengeance is mine:'[2] the regenerate soul, contrarily, gives place to wrath, and 'puts on the bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing, forgiving;' and will not 'be overcome with evil, but overcomes evil with good.'[4] We have so much of God, as we can remit injuries; so much of Satan, as we would revenge them.

LI.

It is worth observing how nature hath taught all living creatures to be their own physicians: the same power that gave them a being, hath led them to the means of their own preservation. No Indian is so savage, but that he knows the use of his tobacco and contra-yerva.[5] Yea, even the brute creatures are bred with this skill. The dog, when he is stomach-sick, can go right to his proper grass; the cat, to her nep;[6] the goat, to his hemlock; the weazel, to rue; the hart, to ditany; the sick lion can cure himself with an ape; the monkey, with a spider; the bear, with an ant-heap: to what purpose should we instance, when the case is universal? the toad hath recourse to the plantain-leaf, the tortoise to his pennyroyal; and, in short, there

[1] Col. iii. 13. [2] Rom. xii. 19; Deut. xxxii. 35.
[3] Col. iii. 12, 13. [4] Rom. xii. 21.
[5] A plant which grows in the West Indies, used as an antidote against poison or infection.—Ed.
[6] Nepeta, Lat. cat's-mint.—Ed.

is none but knows his own medicine. As for the reasonable creature, in all the civilized regions of the world, we may well say now of every nation as it was of old said of Egypt, that it is a country of physicians. There is not a housewife but hath an apothecary's shop in her garden, which affords her those receipts whereby she heals the ails of her complaining family. Only mankind is mortally soul-sick; and, naturally, neither knows, nor seeks, nor cares for remedy. O thou, that art the great Physician in heaven, first cure our insensibleness; make thou us as sick of our sins as we have made ourselves sick by sin, and then speak the word, and we shall be whole.

LII.

When I consider the precious ornaments of the high-priest, the rich fabric and furniture of the tabernacle, the bountiful gifts which the princes of the tribes offered at the dedication of the altar;[1] I cannot but think, what a mass of wealth Israel brought with them out of Egypt. These treasures grew not in the wilderness; neither did Jacob and his sons bring them out of Canaan: they were gathered in their Goshen. It was a hard bondage, under which Israel was held by the latter Pharaohs; yet, as if then, instead of the furnaces of bricks, they had been labouring in the silver mines to their own advantage; they come out laden with precious metals. What should I say to this? God said, 'Israel is my first born;' and the first born was to have a double portion. What was Israel but a type of God's church? Now, the church of God

[1] Num. viii.

may be held down with cruel tyranny; but, in spite of all opposition, it will thrive. And, 'though they have lain among the pots, yet shall they be as the wings of a dove covered with silver; and her feathers with yellow gold.'[1] And, if the spouse of Christ shall be stripped of her outward ornaments, yet the King's daughter is all glorious within—rich in those heavenly endowments of grace and holiness which shall make her dear and lovely in the eyes of her celestial Bridegroom. Shortly, the church may be impaired in her external estate; but if, the while, she gathers so much the more of those better treasures, what hath she lost? Godliness is great gain with contentment. If she have less of the world, and more of God, what cause can she have of complaint, or her enemies of insultation.

LIII.

He that is a God of order, loves both to set and keep it. For the service of his sanctuary he appointed several offices, and in those offices several degrees. None of those might interfere with others. The Levites might not meddle with the priests' charge: nor one degree of Levites with another. The porters might not thrust in amongst the singers, though, perhaps, some of their voices might be more tunable; neither might the singers change places with the porters. The sons of Merari, that were to carry the boards, bars, and pillars of the tabernacle and the court, might not change with the sons of Gershon, for the lighter burden of the curtains and hangings:[2] nor those of Gershon, for

[1] Psalm lxviii. 13. [2] Num. iv. 21—33.

the more holy load of the vessels of the sanctuary, committed to the sons of Kohath;[1] neither might the sons of Kohath so much as go in to see the covering of those sacred utensils by Aaron and his sons, upon no less pain than death.[2] So punctual was God in setting every man his proper station, and holding him to it without either neglect or change. And why should we think God less curious in his evangelical church? It was the charge of him, who, next under the Almighty, had the marshalling of the church of the Gentiles; 'Let every man abide in the same calling, wherein he was called.'[3] Perhaps there may be a better head for policy upon plebeian shoulders, than the governor's: shall that man leave his rank, and thrust into the chair of government? Neither is it other in spiritual offices. It is no thinking, that the wise and holy God will be pleased with a well-meant confusion. For all our employments in the service of the Almighty, we must consult, not with our abilities, but with our vocation.

LIV.

I see too many men willing to live to no purpose, caring only to be rid of time, on what terms soever, making it the only scope of their life to live; a disposition that may well befit brute creatures, which are not capable of any other aim, save merely their own preservation; but, for men that enjoy the privilege of reason, for Christians that pretend a title to religion, too base and unworthy. Where God hath bestowed these higher faculties he looks for other improvements; for, what a poor thing is it,

[1] Num. iv. 15. [2] Ib. iv. 20. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 20.

only to live! a thing common to us with the most despised vermin that breeds on our own corruption; but to live for some more excellent ends, is that which reason suggests, and religion perfects. Here, then, are divers subordinations of ends; whereof one makes way for another, and all for the supreme. We labour and exercise, that we may eat; we eat that we may live, and maintain health and strength; we desire health and strength, that we may do good to ourselves and many, that we may be able to do service to God, our king, and country; and therein we drive at the testimony of a good conscience, approving to God our holy desires and endeavours; and, in all these, at the glory and salvation of our souls; and lastly, in that, as the highest of all ends, at the glory of our blessed Creator and Redeemer. This is indeed to live: otherwise we may have a being for a time upon earth, but a life I cannot call it; and, when we must cease to be, we are necessarily swallowed up with the horror of either not being at all, or of being eternally miserable.

LV.

All our love is moved from some good, which we apprehend in the party loved—carnal love from beauty; worldly from gain; spiritual from grace; divine, from infinite goodness. It must needs be, therefore, that, when the ground and motive of our love faileth, the affection itself must cease. Those that are enamoured of a beautiful face, find their passion cooled with a loathsome deformity; those that are led by the hopes of profit, like wasps, leave buzzing about the gally-pot, when all the honey is gone; those that could carry the rod familiarly in

their hand, run from it when they see it turned to a serpent. Contrarily, when that which attracts our love is constant to itself and everlasting, the affection set upon it is permanent and eternal. If, then, I love God for riches, for preferment, for my own indemnity; when intervening crosses strip me of the hopes of all these, I shall be ready to say, with that distempered king of Israel, 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord: what should I wait on the Lord any longer?'[1] If my respects to my Saviour be for the loaves and fishes, my heart is carried away with those baskets of fragments; but, if I can love God for his goodness' sake, this love shall outlast time, and over-match death.

LVI.

What a wretched narrowness of heart is this which I find in myself, that, when I may have all things, I take up with nothing; and, when I may be possessed of an infinite good, I please myself in grasping a little thick clay! It was a large word that the apostle said to his Corinthians: 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.'[2] What, shall we think they were richer than their neighbours? or is not this the condition of all those of whom he can say in the next words, 'ye are Christ's?' There, there comes in all our right to this infinite wealth: of ourselves we are beggars; in him, who is Lord of All, we are fœffed in all things: for, while he saith, 'All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;' he doth, in effect, say, 'Christ is yours; and, in him, God is

[1] 2 Kings. vi. 33. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 22.

yours;' for this right is mutual. How else should all things be ours, if God were not ours; without whom all is nothing? And how should God the Father be ours, without that Son of his love, who hath said, 'All things that the Father hath are mine.' 'Thou, O Father, art in me, and I in thee.' 'No man cometh to the Father but by me.'[1] If then Christ be mine, all is mine; and if I have so oft received him, and so often renewed my union with him, how is he but mine? O Saviour, let me feel myself thoroughly possest of thee, whether the world slide or sink, I am happy.

LVII.

God will not vouchsafe to allow so much honour to wicked instruments, as to make them the means of removing public evils. The magicians of Egypt could have power to bring some plagues upon the land, but had not the power to take them away. Certainly there needed a greater power to give a being to the frogs, than to call them off; yet this latter they cannot do, who prevailed in the first. Moses and Aaron must be called, to fetch off that judgment which the sorcerers have brought upon themselves. Neither is it otherwise still: wicked men can draw down those plagues upon a nation which only the faithful must remove: the sins of the one make work for the others' intercession. Do we, therefore, smart and groan under heavy calamities? We know to whom we are beholden: 'Thus saith the Lord to this people, Thus have they loved to wander; they have not refrained their feet; therefore he will now remember their iniquity, and visit

[1] John, xvi. 15; xvii. 21; xiv. 6.

their sins. When they fast I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offerings and an oblation, I will not accept them; but I will consume them by the sword and by the famine, and by the pestilence.'[1] Do we desire to be freed from the present evils, and to escape an utter desolation? They are Moses and Aaron, that must do it. 'He said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.'[2] When our quarrel is with heaven, it is not our force or our policy that can save us. Every faithful man is a favourite of the King of Glory; and can do more than command legions. Then is a people in some good way towards safety, when they have learned to know their friends. While we have good men's prayers to grapple with wicked men's sins, there may be hopes of recovery.

LVIII.

The aiming at a good end can be no just excuse for an unlawful act or disposition; but, if contentment did consist in having much, it were a sore temptation to a man to be covetous, since that contentation is the thing wherein the heart of man is wont to place its chief felicity; neither indeed can there be any possible happiness without it. But the truth is, abundance is no whit guilty, so much as of ease, much less, of a full joy: how many have we known, that have spent more pleased and happy hours under a house of sticks, and walls of mud, and roof of straw, than great potentates have done under marbles and cedar! And how many,

[1] Jer. xiv. 10. 12. [2] Psalm, cvi. 23.

both wise heathen and mortified Christians, have rid their hands of their cumbersome store that they might be capable of being happy! Other creatures do naturally neglect that, which abused reason bids us dote upon. If we had no better powers than beasts or fowls, we should not at all care for this either white or red earth; and, if our graces were as great as the least of saints, we should look carelessly upon the preciousest and largest treasures that the earth can afford. Now, our debauched reason, instead of stirring us up to emulate the best creatures, draws us down below the basest of them; moving us to place our happiness in those things, which have neither life nor true worth; much less can give that which they have not. It is not for the generous souls of Christians to look so low as to place their contentment in any thing, whether within the bowels, or upon the face of this earth; but to raise their thoughts up to the glorious region of their original and rest, 'looking, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'[1]

LIX.

The holy Psalmist knew well what he said, when he called the thunder in the clouds, 'The voice of the Lord; a voice, powerful and full of majesty.'[2] The very heathens made this the most awful act of their Jupiter; which the Spirit of God expresses in a more divine language: 'The God of glory thundereth.'[3] Upon this dreadful sound it is, that the Psalmist calls to the 'mighty ones,' to 'give unto

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 18. [2] Psalm, xxix. 4. [3] Ib. ver. 3.

the Lord glory and strength,' to 'give unto the Lord the glory due to his name;'[1] as it were advising the great commanders of the world, when they hear it thunder, to fall down on their knees, and to lift up their hands and eyes to that great God that speaks to them from heaven. No man needs to bid the stoutest heart to fear, when this terrible sound strikes through his ear, which is able to drive even Neros and Caligulas into benchholes; but this mighty voice calls for an improvement of our fear, to the glory of that Almighty power whence it proceeds. Perhaps the presumption of man will be finding out the natural causes of this fearful uproar in the clouds; but the working by means derogates nothing from the God of nature.[2] Neither yet are all thunders natural: that whirlwind and thunder, wherein God spake to Job[3]—that thunder and lightning, wherein God spake to Moses and Israel in Mount Sinai[4]—that thunder and rain, wherewith God answered the prayer of Samuel in wheat-harvest, for Israel's conviction in the unseasonable suit for their king[5]—that thundering voice from heaven, that answered the prayer of the Son of God, for the glorifying of his name[6]—the seven thunders, that uttered their voices to the beloved disciple in Patmos,[7]—had nothing of ordi-

[1] Psalm, xxix. ver. 1, 2.

[2] This is a remark especially worthy to be remembered in an age like the present, when the wide diffusion of a superficial acquaintance with natural science is making practical atheists of so many; who in the discovery of the laws of nature, willingly forget the Lawgiver. For a reflecting mind, however, second causes are rather guides and steps to the First Cause, than obstacles to perceiving Him.—Ed.

[3] Job, xl. 9; xxxviii. 1.

[4] Exod. xix.

[5] 1 Sam. xii. 17, 18.

[6] John, xii. 28, 29.

[7] Rev. x. 3, 4.

nary nature in them. And how many have we heard and read of, that for slighting of this great work of God, have at once heard his voice and felt his stroke! Shortly, if any heart can be unmoved at this mighty voice of God, it is stiffer than the rocks in the wilderness: for, 'The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness, the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.'[1] For me, I tremble at the power, while I adore the mercy, of that great God that speaks so loud to me. It is my comfort, that He is my Father, who approves himself thus omnipotent; his love is no less infinite than his power: let the terror be to them that know him angry; let my confidence overcome my fear: 'It is the Lord; let him do what he will.' All is not right with me, till I have attained to tremble at him while he shineth, and to rejoice in him while he thundereth.

IX.

We talk of mighty warriors that have done great exploits in conquering kingdoms; but the Spirit of God tells us of a greater conquest than all theirs: 'Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith.'[2] Alas! the conquest of those great commanders was but poor and partial—of some small spots of the earth: the conquest of a regenerate Christian is universal—of the whole world. Those other conquerors, while they prevailed abroad, were yet overcome at home; and, while they were the lords of nations, were no other

[1] Psalm, xxix. 8. [2] 1 John, v. 4.

than vassals to their own lusts: these begin their victories at home, and enlarge their triumphs over all their spiritual enemies. The glory of those other victors was laid down with their bodies in the dust: the glory that attends these is eternal. What pity it is, that the true Christian should not know his own greatness; that he may raise his thoughts accordingly, and bear himself as one that tramples the world under his feet! 'For all that is in the world,' is 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.'[1] These he hath truly subdued in himself; not so as to bereave them of life, but of rule: if he have left them some kind of being still in him, yet he hath left them no dominion: and therefore may well style himself the Lord of the world. Far, far therefore be it from him, that he should so abject and debase himself, as to be a slave to his vassals: none but holy and high thoughts and demeanors may now beseem him: and in these spiritual regards of his inward greatness and self-conquests, his word must be, "Either Cæsar, or nothing."

LXI.

I see so many kinds of phrensies in the world, and so many seemingly wise brains taken with them; that I much doubt whom I may be sure to account free, from either the touch, or at least the danger of this indisposition. How many opinions do I see raised every day, that argue no less than a mere spiritual madness; such as, if they should have been but mentioned seven years ago, would

[1] 1 John, ii. 16.

have been questioned out of what bedlam they had broken loose![1] And, for dispositions, how do we see one, so ragingly furious, as if he had newly torn off his chains and escaped; another so stupidly senseless, that you may thrust pins into him up to the head, and he startles not at it! One so dumpishly sad, as if he would freeze to death in melancholy, and hated any contentment but in sorrow; another so apishly jocund, as if he cared for no other pastime than to play with feathers! One so superstitiously devout, that he is ready to cringe and crouch to every stock; another so wildly profane, that he is ready to spit God in the face! Shortly, one so censorious of others, as if he thought all men mad but himself; another so mad, as that he thinks himself and all madmen sober and well-witted! In this store and variety of distempers, were I not sure of my own principles, I could easily misdoubt myself: now, settled on firm grounds, I can pity and bewail the woeful distraction of many; and can but send them for recovery to that Divine Wisdom, who calls to them in the openings of the gates, and uttereth her words, saying: 'How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? turn you at my reproof.'[2] 'O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.'[1] 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates: but he that sinneth against me, wrong-

[1] How pointedly applicable this remark is to other times besides the age in which it was called forth, is sufficiently obvious.—Ed.

[2] Prov. i. 22. [3] Ib. viii. 5.

eth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death.'[1]

LXII.

Man, as he consists of a double nature, flesh and spirit, so is he placed in a middle rank, betwixt an angel, which is a spirit, and a beast, which is flesh; partaking of the qualities, and performing the acts of both. He is angelical in his understanding, in his sensual affections bestial; and to whether of these he most inclineth and conformeth himself, that part wins more of the other, and gives a denomination to him: so as he, that was before half angel, half beast, if he be drowned in sensuality, hath lost the angel, and is become a beast; if he be wholly taken up with heavenly meditations, he hath quit the beast, and is improved angelical. It is hard to hold an equal temper; either he must degenerate into a beast, or be advanced to an angel.[2] Mere reason sufficiently apprehends the difference of the condition: could a beast be capable of that faculty, he would wish to be a man rather than a brute, as he is. There is not more difference betwixt a man and a beast, than between an angel and a brutish man. How must I needs therefore be worse than beast, if, when I may be preferred to that happy honour, I should rather affect to be a beast than an angel! Away, then, with the bestial delights of the sensual appetite; let not my soul sink in this mud; let me be wholly for those intellectual pleasures which are pure and spiritual; and let my ambition be, to come as near to the angel as this clog of my flesh will permit.

[1] Prov. viii. 34. 36.

[2] A momentous truth, admirably expressed.

LXIII.

There is great difference in men's dispositions under affliction: some there are, dead-hearted patients, that grow mopish and stupid with too deep a sense of their sufferings; others, out of a careless jollity, are insensible even of sharp and heavy crosses. We are wont to speak of some whose enchanted flesh is invulnerable: this is the state of those hearts which are so bewitched with worldly pleasures that they are not to be pierced with any calamity that may befall them, in their estates, children, husbands, wives, friends; so as they can say with Solomon's drunkard, 'They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, but I felt it not.'[1] These are dead flesh, which do no more feel the knife than if it did not at all enter; for whom some corrosives are necessary to make them capable of smart. This disposition, though it seems to carry a face of fortitude and patience, yet is justly offensive, and not a little injurious, both to God and the soul: to God, whom it endeavours to frustrate of those holy ends which he proposeth to himself in our sufferings; for wherefore doth he afflict us, if he would not have us afflicted? wherefore doth the father whip the child, but that he would have him smart, and by smarting bettered? he looks for cries and tears, and the child that weeps not under the rod is held graceless: to the soul, whom it robs of the benefit of our suffering; for what use can there be of patience, where there is no sense of evil? and how can patience have its perfect work, where it is not? Betwixt

[1] Prov. xxiii. 35.

both these extremes, if we would have our souls prosper, a mid-disposition must be attained: we must be so sensible of evils, that we be not stupified with them, and so resolute under our crosses that we may be truly sensible of them; not so brawned under the rod that we should not feel it, nor yet so tender that we should over-feel it; not more patient under the stripe, than willing to kiss the hand that inflicts it.

LXIV.

God, as he is one, so he loves singleness and simplicity in the inward parts. As, therefore, he hath been pleased to give us those senses double, whereby we might let in for ourselves, as our eyes and ears; and those limbs double, whereby we might act for ourselves, as our hands and feet; so those which he would appropriate to himself, as our hearts for belief, and our tongue for confession, he hath given us single; neither did he ever ordain, or can abide two hearts in a bosom, two tongues in one mouth. It is then the hateful style, which the Spirit of God gives to a hypocrite, that he is 'double minded.' In the language of God's Spirit, a fool hath no heart; and a dissembler hath a heart and a heart: and surely, as a man that hath two heads is a monster in nature, so he that hath two hearts is no less a spiritual monster to God. For the holy and wise God hath made one for one, one mind or soul for one body; and if the regenerate man have two men in one, the old man and the new, yet it is so as that one is flesh, the other spirit; the mind then is not double, but the law of the

[1] James, iv. 8.

mind is opposed to the law of the flesh;[1] so as here are strivings in one heart, not the sidings of two. For, surely, the God of unity can neither endure multiplication nor division of hearts in one breast. If, then, we have one heart for God, another for mammon, we may be sure God will not own this latter—how should he, for he made it not? Yea, most justly will he disclaim both; since that which he made was but one, this double. And, as the wise man hath told us, that God hates nothing which he hath made; so may we truly say, God hateth whatsoever he made not, since what he made not is only evil. When I have done my best, I shall have but a weak and a faulty heart; but, Lord, let it be but a single one: 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'[2]

LXV.

There is a kind of not-being in sin; for sin is not an existence of somewhat that is, but a deficiency of that rectitude which should be: it is a privation, but not without a real mischief; as blindness is but a privation of sight, but a true misery. Now, a privation cannot stand alone, it must have some subject to learn upon: there is no blindness, but where there is an eye; no death, but where there hath been a life. Sin, therefore, supposes a soul wherein it is; and an act whereto it cleaveth; and those acts of sin are they which the apostle calls the 'works of darkness:'[3] so as there is a kind

[1] Rom. vii. 23. [2] Psalm, cxxxix. 23, 24.
[3] Eph. v. 11.

of operosity in sin; in regard whereof, sinners are styled 'the workers of iniquity.'[1] And, surely, there are sins wherein there is more toil and labour than in the holiest actions: what pains and care doth the thief take in setting his match, in watching for his prey! how doth he spend the darkest and coldest nights in the execution of his plot! what fears, what flights, what hazards, what shifts are here to avoid notice and punishment! The adulterer says, that "stolen waters are sweet;" but that sweet is sauced to him with many careful thoughts, with many deadly dangers. The superstitious bigot, who is himself besotted with error, how doth he traverse sea and land to make a proselyte! what adventures doth he make, what perils doth he run, what deaths doth he challenge, to mar a soul! So as some men take more pains to go to hell, than some others do to go to heaven. Oh, the sottishness of sinners, that with a temporary misery will needs purchase an eternal! How should we think no pains sufficient for the attainment of heaven, when we see wretched men toil so much for damnation!

LXVI.

With what elegance and force doth the Holy Ghost express our Saviour's leaving of the world; which he calls his taking home again, or his receiving up![2] In the former, implying that the Son of God was, for the time, sent out of his Father's house, to these lower regions of his exile or pilgrimage, and was now re-admitted into those his glorious mansions; in the latter, so inti-

[1] Luke, xiii. 27. [2] Ibid. ix. 51.

mating his triumphant ascension, that he passeth over his bitter passion. Surely, he was to take death in his way; so he told his disciples in the walk to Emmaus: 'Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?'[1] He must be lifted up to the cross, ere his ascension to heaven. But, as if the thought of death were swallowed up in the blessed issue of his death, here is no mention of ought but his assumption. Lo! death truly swallowed up in victory. Neither is it otherwise, proportionally, with us; wholly so it cannot be. For as for him, death did but taste of him, could not devour him, much less put him over; it could not but yield him whole and entire the third day, without any impairing of his nature; yea, with a happy addition to it, of a glorious immortality, and in that glorified humanity he ascended by his own power into his heaven. For us, we must be content that one part of us lie rotting for the time in the dust; while our spiritual part shall, by the ministry of angels, be received up to those everlasting habitations. Here is an assumption therefore, true and happy, though not as yet total. And why should I not, therefore, have my heart taken up, with the assured expectation of this receiving up into my glory? Why do I not look beyond death, at the eternally-blessed condition of this soul of mine; which, in my dissolution, is thus crowned with immortality? So doth the sea-beaten mariner cheer up himself with the sight of that haven which he makes for. So doth the traveller comfort himself, when, after a tempestuous storm, he sees the sun

[1] Luke xxiv. 26.

breaking forth in his brightness. I am dying; but, O Saviour, thou art 'the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in thee, though he be dead, yet shall he live.'[1] 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.'[2] 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.'[3]

LXVII.

What need I be troubled, that I find in myself a fear of death? What Israelite is not ready to run away at the sight of this Goliath? This fear is natural; and so far from being evil, that it was incident to the Son of God, who 'was heard in that which he feared.' Christianity serves not to destroy, but to rectify nature. Grace regulates this passion in us, and corrects the exorbitances of it, never intended to root it out. Let me, therefore, entertain this fear, but so that I may master it. If I cannot avoid fear, let it be such as may be incident to a faithful man. While my fear apprehends just terror in the face of death, let my faith lay fast hold on that blessed Saviour, who hath both overcome and sweetened it; on that blessed estate of glory, which accompanies it: my fear shall end in joy, my death in advantage.

LXVIII.

It is too plain, that we are fallen upon the old age of the world; the last times, and therefore nearest to the dissolution. And if time itself did

[1] John xi. 25. [2] Isaiah xxvi. 19.
[3] Rev. xiv. 13.

not evince it, the disposition and qualities would most evidently do it: for to what a cold temper of charity are we grown! what mere ice is in these spiritual veins! The unnatural and unkindly flushings of self-love abound indeed every where; but for true Christian love, it is come to old David's pass; it may be covered with clothes, but it can get no heat.[1] Besides, what whimsies and fancies of dotage do we find the world possessed withal, beyond the examples of all former times! what wild and mad opinions have been lately broached, which the settled brains of better ages could never have imagined! Unto these how extremely choleric the world is grown in these later times, there needs no other proof than the effusion of so much blood in this present age, as many preceding centuries of years have been sparing to spill. What should I speak of the moral distempers of diseases; the confluence whereof hath made this age more wickedly miserable, than all the former? for whenever was there so much profaneness, atheism, blasphemy, schism, excess, disobedience, oppression, licentiousness, as we now sigh under? Lastly, that which is the common fault of age, loquacity, is a plain evidence of the world's declinedness; for was there ever age guilty of so much tongue and pen as the last? were ever the presses so cloyed with frivolous work? Every man thinks what he lists, and speaks what he thinks, and writes what he speaks, and prints what he writes. Neither would the world talk so much, did it not make account it cannot talk long. What should we do then, since we know the world truly

[1] 1 Kings, i. 1.

old, and now going upon his great and fatal climacterical; but as discreet men would carry themselves to impotent and decrepid age, bear with the infirmities of it, pity and bewail the distempers, strive against the enormities, and prepare for the dissolution.[1]

LXIX.

There cannot be a stronger motive to awe and obedience than that which St. Peter enforceth: 'That God is both a father and a judge;'[2] the one is a title of love and mercy, the other of justice. Whatever God is, he is all that: he is all love and mercy; he is all justice. He is not so a judge, that he hath waved the title and affection of a father; he is not so a father, that he will remit ought of his infinite justice as a judge. He is, he will ever be, both these in one; and we must fasten our eyes upon both these at once, and be accordingly affected unto both. He is a father, therefore here must be a loving awe; he is a judge, and therefore here must be an awful love and obedience. So must we lay hold of the tender mercies of a father, that we may rejoice continually; so must we apprehend the justice of a righteous judge, that we do lovingly tremble. Why then should man despair? God is a Father. All the bowels

[1] The circumstances alleged by Hall in support of this favourite, but not very philosophical notion, are, in several instances, unhappily chosen; of such as have a juster application, the greater part are no less *prophetic* than directly characteristic; proving that the march of society proceeds in *cycles*, and not in a direct line, as is implied in the idea that the terms youth, maturity, and old age, indicate, when thus applied, a close analogy.

[2] 1 Peter, i. 17.

of mortal and human love are strait to his: 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee;'[1] saith the Lord. That which is the title of his personality in divine relation, is also the title of his gracious relation to us Father: neither can he be other than he is styled. And contrarily, how dare man presume, since this Father is a judge? It is for sinful flesh and blood to be partial: foolish parents may be apt to connive at the sins of their own loins or bowels, because theirs; either they will not see them, or not hate them, or not censure them, or not punish them: the infinite justice of a God cannot wink at our failings; there is no debt of our sin, but must be paid in ourselves, or our surety. If then we call him 'Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work;' why do we not 'pass the time of our sojourning here in fear?'[2]

LXX.

How terrible a motion was that, which was made by the two disciples, of commanding fire to come down from heaven and consume the inhospitable Samaritans? Methinks I could tremble but at the imagination of so dreadful a judgment as they did not fear to sue for. Yet if we look to the offence, it was no positive act of indignity offered to Christ, but the mere not lodging of his train; and that not out of a rude inhumanity, but out of a religious scruple. What could they have said if these Samaritans had pursued them with swords, and staves, and

[1] Isaiah, xlix. 15. [2] 1 Peter, i 17.

stones? Whom shall we hope to find free from cruelty of revenge, when even the disciple of love was thus overtaken? What wonder is it if natural men be transported with furious desires, when so eminent domestics and followers of our Saviour were thus faulty? Surely nature in man is cruel; neither is there any creature under heaven so bloody to its own kind. Even bears, and wolves, and tigers, devour not one another; and if any of them fall out in single combats for a prey, here is no public engaging for blood. Neither do they affect to enjoy each others' torment, rather entertaining one anothers' complaints with pity: let but a swine cry, the rest of the herd within the noise come running in to see and compassionate his pain. Only man rejoices in the misery of the same flesh and blood with himself, and loves to triumph in his revenge. While we are thus affected, we know not of what spirit we are: we may soon learn; we are even of that spirit who was 'a man-slayer from the beginning.'[1] As for the good spirit, his just style is, the 'preserver of men:'[2] and the errand of the Son of Man was, 'not to destroy men's lives, but to save them;'[3] and his charge to these and all other his disciples, 'Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful.'[4] And how easily may you observe, that this very disciple, as if in way of abundant satisfaction for this rash oversight, calls more for love than all the rest of his master's train! telling us that 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him;'[5] and, 'Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and

[1] John, viii. 44. [2] Job, vii. 20.
[3] Luke, ix. 56. [4] Luke, vi. 36.
[5] 1 John, iv. 16.

every one that loveth is of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.'[1] Shortly then, what would not this holy disciple have given to have recalled this fiery motion? The more mercy and charity is in us, the more we have of God; the more fury and revenge, of Satan.

LXXI.

Much caution must be had in our imitation of the acts of the holiest; cautions, both in respect of the persons, and of the actions. God himself, yea God clothed in flesh, though the pattern of all perfection, is not for our universal imitation; the most of their actions are for our wonder, not for our exampling. And amongst men, how absurd were it in a peasant to imitate a king! or one of the long robe a soldier! If Moses climb up the hill of God, Sinai, shall another Israelite say, "Moses goes up, why not I?" so he might have paid dear for his presumption: Moses was called up, the rest were limited; and if a beast touch the hill, he shall die. That act may beseem one, which would be very incongruous in another: the dog fawns upon his master, and hath his back stroked; if the ass do the like he is beaten. We are naturally apt to be carried with examples. It is one of the greatest improvements of wisdom, to know whom, in what, and how far, we may imitate. The best have their weaknesses: there is no copy without a blur: 'Be ye followers of me,' saith the chosen vessel; but how? 'even as I am of Christ.'[2] It is safe following him, that cannot err.

[1] 1 John, iv. 7, 8.
[2] Phil. iii. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xi. 1.

LXXII.

God who is simply one, infinitely perfect, absolutely complete in himself, enjoys himself fully, from all eternity, without any relation to the creature; but knowing our wants and weaknesses, he hath ordained a society for our well-being; and therefore, even in man's innocency, could say, 'It is not good for a man to be alone.' And why, Lord? why might not man have taken pleasure enough in the beauty and sweetness of his paradise, in contemplating thy heaven, in the command of thine obsequious creatures; and, above all, in the fruition of thy divine presence, in that happy integrity of his nature, without any accession of other helps? Surely thou, who knewest well what disposition thou hadst put into him, intendedst to fit him with all meet conveniences; and thou, who madest him sociable, before he could have any society, thoughtest fit to stead him with such a society as might make his life comfortable to him. Wise Solomon observes it out of his deep experience, for 'a vanity under the sun, that there is one alone, and there is not a second;' and that, 'two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour.'[1] In the plantation of the evangelical church, the apostles are not reckoned single, but by pairs;[2] and so doth their Lord send them upon the great errand of his gospel; and when he seconded that work by a commission given to his seventy disciples, he 'sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place,

[1] Eccl. iv. 7, 8, 9. [2] Matth. x. 2, 3, 4.

whither he himself would come.'[1] After this, when our Saviour had left the earth, Paul and Barnabas go together; and when they are parted, Paul and Silas, Barnabas and Mark, are sorted. Single endeavours seldom prosper; many hands make the work both quick and sure. They can be no friends to the happy estate of a family or church that labour to cause distractions: division makes certain way for ruin.

LXXIII.

Under the law, there was difference, as of ages, so of sexes. Circumcision was appropriated to the male. In the temple there was the court of the Jews; and without that, the court of the women; neither might that sex go beyond their bounds; and still it is so in their Jewish synagogues. But in Christ, 'there is neither male nor female.' As the soul hath no sex, so God makes no difference in the acceptation of either. As it is the honour of the one sex that Christ, the Son of God, was a man, so it is the honour of the other sex that he was born of a woman. And if the woman be, as she is in nature, the weaker vessel, yet she is no less capable of grace than the stronger; as the thinnest glass may receive as precious liquor as the best plate. Good Anna, as well as Simeon, gave glory to their new-born Saviour, 'to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.'[2] And afterwards, the holy women were no less zealous attendants of Christ, both in his life and death, than the most forward disciples;[3] yea, they followed him when his domestic followers forsook him; neither could he

[1] Luke, x. 1. [2] Ib. ii. 38. [3] Ib. viii. 2, 3.

parted by either his cross or his grave.[1] And they were the first that were honoured with the notice and message of their Saviour's blessed resurrection and ascension;'[2] than which, what employment could be more noble? 'The Lord gave the word,' saith the Psalmist, 'great was the company of the preacheresses;'[3] the word is feminine. However, therefore, in natural and polite respects, the philosopher might have some reason to bless God, that he had made him a man, and not a woman; yet in spiritual, which are the best regards, here is no inequality; so that it is the great mercy and goodness of our common Creator, that though he hath made a difference in the smallest matters, yet he makes none in the greatest; and that he so indifferently peoples heaven with both sexes, that for ought we know, the greatest saint there is of the weaker sex.[4]

LXXIV.

There is nothing more easy than for a man to be courageous in a time of safety, and to defy those dangers which he neither feels nor sees. While the coast is clear every man can be ready to say with Peter, 'Though all men, yet not I; if I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.'[5] But when the evil hour cometh, when our enemy appears armed in the lists ready to encounter us, then to call up our spirits, and to grapple resolutely with dangers and death, it is the praise and proof of a true Christian valour. And this is

[1] "Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave."—Ed.
[2] John, xx. 17. [3] Psalm, lxviii. 11.
[4] King James's Preface Monitory.
[5] Mark, xiv. 29, 31.

that which the apostle calls 'standing;'[1] in opposition to both falling and fleeing; falling out of faintness, and fleeing for fear. It shall not be possible for us thus to stand if we shall trust to our feet. In and of ourselves the best of us are but mere cowards; neither can be able so much as to look our enemy in the face. Would we be perfect victors? we must go out of ourselves, into the God of our strength. If we have made him ours, who shall, yea, who can, be against us? 'We can do all things, through him that strengthens us;'[2] all things—therefore conquer death and hell. If we be weakness, he is omnipotence. Put we on the Lord Jesus Christ by a lively faith,[3] what enemy can come within us to do us hurt? 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee, O God: in thee, O God, have I trusted; I will not fear what (either) flesh (or spirit) can do unto me.'[4] 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation: I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies.'[5]

LXXV.

It is disparagement enough that the apostle casts upon all the visible things of this world, that 'the things which are seen are temporary.'[6] Be they never so glorious, yet being transitory, they cannot be worthy of our hearts. Who would care for a house of glass, if never so curiously painted and gilded? All things that are measured by time are

[1] Eph. vi. 13, 14.
[2] Phil. iv. 13.
[3] Rom. xiii. 14.
[4] Psalm, lvi.
[5] Psalm, xviii. 2, 3.
[6] 2 Cor. iv. 18.

thus brittle. Bodily substances, of what kind soever, lie open to the eye; and, being seen, can be in no other than a fading condition. Even that goodly fabric of heaven, which we see and admire, must be changed, and, in a sort, dissolved.[1] How much more vanishing are all earthly glories! And, by how much shorter their continuance is, so much lower must be their valuation. We account him foolish that will dote too much upon a flower, though never so beautiful, because we know it can be but a month's pleasure; and no care, no art can preserve it from withering: amongst the rest the hemerocallis[2] is the least esteemed, because one day ends its beauty. What madness then were it in us to set our hearts upon these perishing contentments, which we must soon mutually leave; we them, they us! Eternity is that only thing which is worthy to take up the thoughts of a wise man: that, being added to evil, makes the evil infinitely more intolerable; and, being added to good, makes the good infinitely more desirable. O eternity! thou bottomless abyss of misery to the wicked, thou indeterminable pitch of joy to the saints of God, what soul is able to comprehend thee? What strength of understanding is able to conceive of thee? Be thou ever in my thoughts, ever before mine eyes. Be thou the scope of all my actions, of all my endeavours; and, in respect of thee, let all this visible world be to me as nothing: and, since only 'the things which are not seen' by the eye of sense, 'are eternal,' Lord, sharpen thou the eyes of my faith, that I may see those things invisible, and may, in that sight, enjoy thy blessed eternity.

[1] 2 Peter, iii. 7, 12. [2] The day-lily.—Ed.

LXXVI.

What is all the world to us, in comparison of the bird in our bosom, our conscience? In vain shall all the world acquit and magnify us, if that secretly condemn us; and if that condemn us not, 'we have confidence towards God,'[1] and may bid defiance to men and devils. Now, that it may not condemn us, it must be both pacified and purged—pacified, in respect of the guilt of sin; purged, in respect of the corruption. For so long as there is guilt in the soul, the clamours of an accusing and condemning conscience can no more be stilled, than the waters of the sea can stand still in a storm. There is then no pacification without removing the guilt of sin, no removing of guilt without remission, no remission without satisfaction, no satisfaction without a price of infinite value, answerable to the infiniteness of the justice offended; and this is no where to be had but in the blood of Christ, God and man. All created and finite powers are but miserable comforters, physicians of no value, to this one. And the same power that pacifieth the conscience from guilt, must also purge it from the filthiness of sin;[2] even that blood of the Son of God, who 'is made unto us of God sanctification and redemption.' That faith, which brings Christ home to the soul, doth, by the efficacy of his blessed Spirit, purify the heart from 'all filthiness' both 'of flesh and spirit. Being justified by' this 'faith, we have peace with God.'[3] When once the heart is quieted from the uproars of self-accusation, and

[1] 1 John, iii. 21. [2] Heb. ix. 14; 1 John, i. 7.
[3] Acts, xv. 9.

cleansed from dead works, what in this world can so much concern us as to keep it so? Which shall be done, if we shall give Christ the possession of our souls, and commit the keys into his only hands: so shall nothing be suffered to enter in that may disturb or defile, if we shall settle firm resolutions in our breasts never to yield to the commission of any known, enormous sin. Failings and slips there will be in the holiest of God's saints, while they carry their clay about them: for these we are allowed to fetch forth a pardon, of course, from that infinite mercy of our God, who hath set a fountain open 'to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness,'[1] by the force of our daily prayers. But if, through an over-bold security and spiritual negligence, we shall suffer ourselves to be drawn away into some heinous wickedness, it must cost warm water to recover us.[2] Neither can it, in such a case, be safe for us to suffer our eyes to sleep, or our eye-lids to slumber, till we have made our peace with heaven. This done, and carefully maintained, what can make us other than happily secure? 'Blessed is he whose conscience hath not condemned him, and who is not fallen from his hope in the Lord.'[3]

LXXVII.

We cannot apprehend heaven in any notion but of excellency and glory; that, as it is in itself a place of wonderful resplendence and majesty, so it is the palace of the most High God, wherein he exhibits his infinite magnificence; that it is the happy receptacle of all the elect of God; that it is the

[1] Zech. xiii. 1. [2] Tears of repentance.—Ed. [3] Ecclus. xiv. 2.

glorious rendezvous of the blessed angels; that we have parents, children, husband, wife, brothers, sisters, friends whom we dearly loved, there. For, such is the power of love, that it can endear any place to us where the party affected is, much more the best. If it be a loathsome gaol, our affection can make it a delightful bower. Yea, the very grave cannot keep us off: the women could say of Mary, that she was gone to the grave of Lazarus to weep there; and the zeal of those holy clients of Christ carries them to seek their (as they supposed still dead) Saviour, even in his tomb. Above all conceivable apprehensions, then, wherein heaven is endeared to us, there is none comparable to that which the apostle enforceth to us, that there 'Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God.'[1] If we have a husband, wife, child, whom we dearly love, pent up in some tower or castle afar off, whither we are not allowed to have access, how many longing eyes do we cast thither! how do we please ourselves to think, within those walls is he inclosed whom my soul loveth, and who is inclosed in my heart! But, if it may be possible to have passage, though with some difficulty and danger, to the place, how gladly do we put ourselves upon the adventure! When, therefore, we hear and certainly know that our most dear Saviour is above, in all heavenly glory, and that the heavens must contain him till his coming again, with what full contentment of heart should we look up thither! How should we break through all these secular distractions, and be carried up by our affections, which are the wings of the soul, towards a happy fruition of him! Good old Jacob, when

[1] Col. iii. 1.

he heard that his darling son was yet alive in Egypt, how doth he gather up his spirits, and take up a cheerful resolution, 'Joseph my son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I die!'[1] Do we think his heart was any more in Canaan, after he heard where his Joseph was? And shall we, when we hear and know where our dearest Saviour, typified by that good patriarch, is; that he is gone before, to provide a place for us in the rich Goshen above; shall we be heartless in our desires towards him, and take up with earth? How many poor souls take tedious, costly, perilous voyages to that land, which only the bodily presence of our Saviour could denominate holy, (their own wickedness justly styles accursed,) only to see the place where our dear Saviour trod, where he stood, where he sat, lay, set his last footing, and find a kind of contentment in this sacred curiosity, returning yet never the holier, never the happier![2] How then should I be affected with the sight of that place where he is now in person, sitting gloriously at the right hand of Majesty, adored by all the powers of heaven! Let it be a covenant between me and my eyes, never to look up at heaven, (as how can I look beside it?) but I shall, in the same instant, think of my blessed Saviour, sitting there in his glorified humanity, united to the incomprehensibly glorious Deity, attended and worshipped by thousand thousands of saints and angels, preparing a place for me and all his elect in those eternal mansions.

[1] Gen. xlv. 26.

[2] The numerous pilgrimages of Roman Catholics to the Holy Land were comparatively recent matters of popular tradition in Bishop Hall's time.—Ed.

LXXVIII.

How lively doth the Spirit of God describe the heavenly affections of faithful Abraham, that 'he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'[1] What city was this but the celestial Jerusalem, the glorious seat of the great empire of heaven? The main strength of any building is in the foundation: if that be firm and sure, the fabric, well knit together, will stand; but if that be either not laid, or lie loose and unsettled, the tottering frame doth but wait upon the next wind for a ruin. The good patriarch had been used to dwell in tents, which were not capable of a foundation. It is like, he and his ancestors wanted not good houses in Chaldea, where they were formerly planted. God calls him forth of those fixed habitations in his own country, to sojourn in tabernacles, or booths, in a strange land; his faith carries him cheerfully along, his present fruition give way to hope for better things. Instead of those poor sheds of sticks and skins, he looks for a city; instead of those stakes and cords, he looks for foundations; instead of men's work, he looks for the architecture of God. Alas, we men will be building castles and towers here upon earth, or in the air rather; such as either have no foundation at all, or, at the best, only a foundation in the dust: neither can there be any other, while they are of man's making; for what can he make in better condition than himself? The city that is of God's building, is deep and firmly grounded upon the rock of his eternal decree; and hath more foun-

[1] Heb. xi. 10.

dations than one, and all of them both sure and costly. God's material house, built by Solomon, had the foundation laid with great squared stone; but 'the foundations of the wall of' this 'city' of God are 'garnished with all manner of precious stones:'[1] 'glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God.' Why do I set up my rest in this house of clay, which is every day falling on my head, while I have the assured expectation of so glorious a dwelling above? 'For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.'[2]

LXXIX.

God, though he be free of his entertainments, yet is curious of his guests. We know what the great house-keeper said to the sordid guest: 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?' To his feast of glory none can come but the pure; without this disposition no man shall so much as see God,[3] much less be entertained by him. To his feast of grace none may come but the clean, and those who, upon strict examination, have found themselves worthy. That we may be meet to sit at either of these tables, there must be a putting off, ere there can be a putting on; a putting off the old garments, ere there can be a putting on the new:[4] the old are foul and ragged; the new clean and holy; for, if they should be worn at once, the foul under-garment would soil and defile the clean; the clean could not cleanse the foul. As it was in

[1] Rev. xxi. 19.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 1.
[3] Heb. xii. 14.
[4] Col. iii. 9, 10.

the Jewish law of holiness, holy flesh in the skirt of the garment could not infuse a holiness into the garment, but the touch of an unclean person might diffuse uncleanness to the garment;[1] thus our professed holiness and pretended graces are sure to be defiled by our secretly-maintained corruption, not our corruption sanctified by our graces: as, in common experience, if the sound person come to see the infected, the infected may easily taint the sound; the sound cannot, by his presence, heal the infected. If ever, therefore, we look to be welcome to the feasts of God, we must 'put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.'[2]

LXXX.

It is not for us to cast a disparagement upon any work of our Maker; much less upon a piece so near, so essential to us; yet, with what contempt doth the apostle seem still to mention our flesh! And, as if he would have it slighted for some forlorn outcast, he charges us not to 'make provision for the flesh!'[3] What! shall we think the holy man was fallen out with a part of himself? Surely, sometimes, his language, that he gives it, is hard. 'The flesh rebels against the spirit: I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;'[4] but how easy is it to observe, that the flesh sometimes goes for the body of man; sometimes for the body of sin! as the first, it is a partner with the soul; as the latter, it is an enemy;

[1] Hag. ii. 12, 13. [2] Col. iii. 9, 10. [3] Rom. xiii. 14. [4] Rom. vii. 18.

and the worst of enemies, spiritual. No marvel, then, if he would not have provision made for such an enemy. In outward and bodily enmity the case and his charge is otherwise: 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;'[1] but here 'make no provision for the flesh.' What reason were there that a man should furnish and strengthen an enemy against himself? But if the flesh be the body of the man, it must challenge a respect; but the very name carries an intimation of baseness; at the best, it is that which is common to beasts with us: 'There is one flesh,' saith the apostle, 'of men, another flesh of beasts;'[2] both are but flesh! Alas! what is it but a clod of earth better moulded; the clog of the soul; a rotten pile; a pack of dust; a feast of worms? But, even as such, provision must be made for it; with a moderate and thrifty care, not with a solicitous; a provision for the necessities and convenience of life, not for the fulfilling of the lusts. This flesh must be fed and clad, not humoured, not pampered: so fed as to hold up nature, not inordinateness: shortly, such a hand must we hold over it, as that we may make it a good servant, not a lawless wanton.

LXXXI.

What action was ever so good, or so completely done, as to be well taken of all hands? Noah and Lot foretell of judgments from God, upon the old world and Sodom, and are scoffed at; Israel would go to sacrifice to God in the wilderness; and they are idle. Moses and Aaron will be go-

[1] Prov. xxv. 21; Rom. xii. 20. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 39.

verning Israel according to God's appointment: 'Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi:' David will be dancing before the ark of the Lord; 'he uncovers himself shamelessly, as one of the vain fellows:'[1] our Saviour is sociable; he is 'a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners:' John Baptist is solitary and austere; he doth it by Beelzebub, the prince of devils:[2] he rides in a homely pomp through Jerusalem; he affects a temporal kingdom, and he is no friend to Cæsar that can suffer him to live: he is, by his almighty power, risen from the dead; his disciples stole him away while the soldiers slept: the Spirit of God descends upon the apostles in fiery and cloven tongues, and they, thus inspired, suddenly speak all languages; they 'are full of new wine.'[3] Stephen preacheth Christ the end of the law; 'he speaks blasphemous words against Moses and against God.'[4] And what aspersions were cast upon the primitive Christians, all histories witness. What can we hope to do or say, that shall escape the censures and misinterpretations of men, when we see the Son of God could not avoid it? Let a man profess himself honestly conscionable; he is a scrupulous hypocrite: let him take but a just liberty in things merely indifferent; he is loosely profane: let him be charitably affected to both parts, though in a quarrel not fundamental; he is an odious neuter, a lukewarm Laodicean. It concerns every wise Christian to settle his heart in a resolved confidence of his own holy and just grounds; and then to go on in a constant course of his well-warranted judgment and practice, with a careless dis-

[1] 2 Sam. vi 20. [2] Matt. xi. 18, 19. [3] Acts, ii. 13.
[4] Acts, vi. 11.

regard of those fools'-bolts which will be sure to be shot at him which way soever he goes.

LXXXII.

All God's dear and faithful ones are notably described by the apostle to be such as 'love the appearing of our Lord Jesus;'[1] for, certainly, we cannot be true friends to those whose presence we do not desire and delight in. Now, this appearing is either in his coming to us, or our going to him: whether ever it be, that he makes his glorious return to us for the judgment of the world, and the full redemption of his elect; or, that he fetches us home to himself, for the fruition of his blessedness; in both or either we enjoy his appearance. If, then, we can only be content with either of these, but do not love them, nor wish for them; our hearts are not yet right with God. It is true that there is some terror in the way to both these: his return to us is not without a dreadful majesty; for 'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;'[2] and the glorious retinue of his blessed angels must needs be with an astonishing magnificence; and, on the other part, our passage to him must be through the gates of death, wherein nature cannot but apprehend a horror; but the immediate issue of both these is so infinitely advantageous and happy, that the fear is easily swallowed up of the joy. Doth the daughter of Jephtha abate aught of her timbrel and dances, because she is to meet a father whose arms are bloody with victory?[3] Doth a loving wife entertain her returning husband otherwise

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 8. [2] 2 Pet. iii. 10. [3] Judges, xi. 34.

thán with gladness, because he comes home in a military pomp? Is the conqueror less joyful to take up his crown, because it is congratulated to him with many peals of ordnance? Certainly then, neither that heavenly state wherein Christ shall return to us, nor the fears of a harmless and beneficial death wherein we shall pass to him, neither may nor can hinder aught of our love to his appearing. O Saviour, come in whatever equipage or fashion thou wilt, thou canst be no other than lovely and welcome. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

LXXXIII.

Suppose a man comes to me on the same errand which the prophet delivered to Hezekiah, 'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live,'[1] with what welcome do I entertain him? Do I, with that good king, turn my face to the wall and weep? or, do I say of the messenger, as David said of Ahimaaz, 'He is a good man, and brings good tidings'?[2] Surely, nature urges me to the former, which cannot but hold dissolution her greatest enemy; for what can she abhor so much as a not-being? faith persuades me to the latter, telling me, that 'to die is gain.'[3] Now, whether of these two shall prevail with me? Certainly, as each of them hath a share in me, so shall either of them act its own part in my soul. Nature shall obtain so much of me, as to fetch from me, upon the sudden apprehension of death, some thoughts of fear; faith shall straight step in and drive away all those weak fears; and raise up my heart to a cheerful expectation of so gainful and happy a change. Nature shows me the ghastliness of death; faith shows

[1] 2 Kings, xx. 1. [2] 2 Sam. xviii. 27. [3] Phil. i. 21.

me the transcendency of heavenly glory. Nature represents to me a rotten carcass; faith presents me with a glorious soul. Shortly, nature startles at the sight of death; faith out-faces and overcomes it. So then I, who at the first blush, could say, 'O death, how bitter is thy remembrance!'[1] can now, upon my deliberate thoughts, say, 'I desire to depart, and to be with Christ.'[2]

LXXXIV.

In the carriage of our holy profession God can neither abide us cowardly nor indiscreet. The same mouth that bade us, when we are persecuted in one city, flee into another, said also, 'He that will save his life shall lose it:' we may neither cloak cowardice with a pretended discretion, nor lose our discretion in a rash courage. He that is most skilful and most valiant may, in his combat, traverse his ground for an advantage; and the stoutest commander may fall flat to avoid a cannon-shot. True Christian wisdom, and not carnal fear, is that wherein we must consult for advice, when to stand to it, and when to give back. On the one side, he dies honourably that falls in God's quarrel; on the other, he that flies may fight again. Even our blessed Leader, that came purposely to give his life for the world, yet, when he found that he was laid for in Judea, flees into Galilee. The practice of some primitive Christians, that, in an ambition of martyrdom went to seek out and challenge dangers and death, is more worthy of our wonder and applause than our imitation. It shall be my resolution, to be warily thrifty in managing my life, when God offers me no just cause of hazard;

[1] Ecclus. xli. 1. [2] Phil. i. 23.

and to be willingly profuse of my blood, when it is called for by that Saviour who was not sparing of shedding his most precious blood for me.

LXXXV.

He had need to be well underlaid, that knows how to entertain the time and himself with his own thoughts. Company, variety of employments or recreations, may wear out the day with the emptiest hearts; but when a man hath no society but of himself, no task to set himself upon but what arises from his own bosom; surely, if he have not a good stock of former notions, or an inward mint of new, he shall soon run out of all, and, as some forlorn bankrupt, grow weary of himself. Hereupon it is, that men of barren and unexercised hearts can no more live without company than fish out of the water; and those heremites and other votaries, which, professing only devotion, have no mental abilities to set themselves on work, are fain to tire themselves and their unwelcome hours with the perpetual repetitions of the same orisons which are now grown to a tedious and heartless formality. Those contemplative spirits that are furnished with gracious abilities, and got into acquaintance with the God of heaven, may and can lead a life, even in the closest restraint or wildest solitariness, nearest to angelical; but those which neither can have Mary's heart nor will have Martha's hand, must needs be unprofitable to others, and wearisome to themselves.

LXXXVI.

There is nothing more easy, than to be a Christian at large; but the beginnings of a strict and

serious Christianity are not without much difficulty; for nature affects a loose kind of liberty, which it cannot endure to have restrained: neither fares it otherwise with it, than with some wild colt; which, at the first taking up, flings, and plunges, and will stand on no ground; but, after it hath been somewhile disciplined at the post, is grown tractable, and quietly submits either to the saddle or the collar. The first is the worst: afterwards, that which was tolerable will prove easy; and that which was easy will be found pleasant. For, in true practical Christianity, there is a more kindly and better liberty: 'Stand fast,' saith the apostle, 'in that liberty, wherewith Christ hath made you free.'[1] Lo here, a liberty of Christ's making; and, therefore, both just and excellent: for what other is this liberty, than a freedom; as from the tyranny of the law, so from the bondage of sin? 'Being then made free from sin,' saith St. Paul, 'ye became the servants of righteousness.'[2] Here are two masters, under one of which every soul must serve; either sin or righteousness: if we be free from one, we are bondmen to the other. We say truly, the service of God, that is of righteousness, is perfect freedom; but, to be free to sin is a perfect bondage, and to serve sin is no other than a vassalage to the devil.[3] From this bondage Christ only can free us: 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;'[4] and we are no Christians,

[1] Gal. v. 1. [2] Rom. vi. 18.

[3] This account of the freedom of the will is as philosophical as it is Christian. The will is free as long as it exists in self-determined submission to the absolute will of God; but the moment it counteracts the divine, it ceases to be a free will, and becomes the slave of a corrupt nature.—Ed.

[4] John, viii. 36.

unless we be thus freed; and, being thus freed, we shall rejoice in the pleasant fetters of our voluntary and cheerful obedience to righteousness; neither would we, for a world, return to those gieves and manacles of sin which we once held our most dear and comely ornaments; and can truly say, 'Thou hast set my feet in a large room.'[1] 'I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.'[2]

LXXXVII.

I cannot but pity and lament the condition of those Christians, who, for the hope of a little earthly dross, do willingly put themselves, for a continuance, out of the pale of God's church. What do they else, but cast themselves quite out of the Almighty's protection; who hath not bound himself to follow them out of his own walks, or to seek them out amongst Turks and infidels? Well may he say to them, as to the chief pastor of Pergamus, 'I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is;'[3] but, have they any reason to expect, that he should dwell with them there, under the reign of that prince of darkness? These men put upon themselves that hard measure, which the man after God's own heart complains to be put upon him by his worst enemies: 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation in the tents of Kedar.'[4] That holy man could, in the bitterness of his soul, inveigh against his persecutors, for no other terms than these men offer to themselves: 'Cursed be they before the Lord, for they have driven me out

[1] Psalm, xxxi. 8.
[2] Ib. cxix. 45.
[3] Rev. ii. 13.
[4] Psalm, cxx. 5.

this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord; saying, Go, serve other gods.'[1] I speak not of those who carry God along with them in his ordinance: all earths are alike to us, where we may freely enjoy his presence; but of those stragglers, who care not to live without God, so they may be befriended by mammon. How ill a match these poor men make for themselves I send them to their Saviour to learn: 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'[2] God forbid, I should give their souls for lost; but I must say, they are hazarded: for herein, doubtless, they tempt God, who hath not promised to keep them in any other, than their just ways; and they do, in a sort, tempt and challenge Satan, to draw them on either to a love of error and impiety, or at least to a cooling of their care and love of truth. How unlike are these men to that wise merchant in the gospel! He sold all that he had to buy the pearl of great price:[3] they sell the pearl to buy a little worthless merchandize. As the greatest part of their traffic stands upon exchange, so I heartily wish they would make this one exchange more—of less care of their wealth, for more care of their souls.

LXXXVIII.

Even when Joseph was a great lord in Egypt, second to none but Pharaoh, and had the command of that richest country of the world; yet then his old father Jacob thought his poor parcel of

[1] 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. [2] Matt. xvi. 26.
[3] Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

Shechem worthy to be bequeathed to him, and embraced of him, as a noble patrimony; because it was in the promised land, and the legacy of a dying father. How justly do I admire the faith, both of the father and son, in this donation! Jacob was now in Goshen, Shechem was in Canaan; neither was the father now in the present possession, nor were the sons in some ages to enjoy it: it was four hundred and thirty years, that Israel must be a sojourner in a strange country, ere they shall enter into the promised land;[1] yet now, as foreseeing the future possession, which his posterity should take of this spot of earth, so long after, Jacob gives Shechem to Joseph, and Joseph apprehends it as a rich blessing, as the double portion of the divided primogeniture. Infidelity is purblind, and can see nothing but that which is hard at hand; faith is quick sighted, and discerns the events of many centuries of years, yea of ages to come. Abraham saw his Saviour's day, and rejoiced to see it, a thousand nine hundred and forty years off; and Adam, before him, almost four thousand years. As to God all things are present, even future; so to those that by a lively faith partake of him. Why do I not, by that faith, see my Saviour returning in his heavenly magnificence, as truly as now I see the heaven whence he shall come? and my body as verily raised from the dust, and become glorious, as now I see it weak and decrepit, and falling into the dust?

[1] Exod. xii. 41.

LXXXIX.

True knowledge causeth appetite and desire, for the will follows the understanding; whatsoever that apprehends to be good for us, the effective part inclines to it. No man can have any regard to an unknown good. If a hungry man did not know that food would refresh and nourish him, or the thirsty that drink would satisfy him, or the naked that fire would warm him, or the sick that physic would recover him, none of these would affect these succours. And, according to our apprehension of the goodness and use of these helps, so is our appetite towards them; for the object of the will is a known good, either true or appearing so. And if our experience can tell us of some that can say, with her in the poet, "I see and approve better things, but follow the worse," it is not for that evil, as evil, much less as worse, can fall into the will; but that their appetite over-carries them to a misconceit of a particular good: so as, howsoever, in a generality, they do confusedly assent to the goodness of some holy act or object; yet, upon the present occasion, here and now, as the school speaketh,[1] their sensitive appetite hath prevailed to draw them to a persuasion that this pleasure or that profit is worthy to be embraced. Like as our first parents had a general apprehension that it was good to obey all the commands of their Creator; but, when it came to the forbidden fruit, now their eye and their ear and their heart tell them it is good for them, both for pleasure and for the gain of knowledge, to taste of that forbidden tree. So then, the miscar-

[1] The divines of the middle ages.—Ed.

riage is not, in that they affect that which they think not to be good, but, in that they think that to be good which is not: for, alas! for one true good there are many seeming, which delude the soul with a fair semblance; as a man, in a generality, esteems silver above brass, but when he meets with a rusty piece of silver and a clear piece of brass, he chooses rather the clear brass than the silver defaced with rust. Surely it is our ignorance that is guilty of our cool neglect of our spiritual good. If we did know how sweet the Lord is in his sure promises, in his unfailing mercies, we could not but long after him, and remain unsatisfied till we find him ours: would God be pleased to shine in our hearts by the light of the true knowledge of himself, we could not have cause to complain of want of heat in our affections towards his infinite goodness. Did we but know how sweet and delectable Christ, the heavenly manna, is, we could not but hunger after him; and we could not hunger, and not be satisfied, and, in being satisfied, blessed.

XC.

Those which we miscall goods, are but in their nature indifferent; and are either good or evil as they are affected, as they are used. Indeed, all their malignity or virtue is in the mind, in the hand of the possessor. Riches ill got, ill kept, ill spent, are but the mammon of iniquity; but, if well, 'the crown of the wise is their riches.'[1] How can it be amiss to have much, when he that was the richest man of the east was the holiest?[2] Yea, when God himself is justly styled the possessor of heaven and

[1] Prov. xiv. 24. [2] Job, i. 1, 3.

earth? How can it be amiss to have little, when our Saviour says, 'Blessed are ye poor?'[1] And if from that divine mouth we hear a woe to the rich, himself interprets it of them that trust in riches.[2] If our riches possess us, instead of our possessing them, we have changed our God, and lost ourselves; but, if we have learnt to use our wealth, and not enjoy it, we may be no less gracious than rich. If a rich man have a large and humble heart, and a just hand, he inherits the blessing of the poor; if a poor man have a proud heart, and a thievish hand, he carries away the woe from the rich. 'Riches,' saith wise Solomon, 'make themselves wings: they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.'[3] So as we may use the matter, our souls may fly thitherward with them; if we 'do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life.'[4] Let me say with Agur, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches;'[5] but whethersoever God gives, I am both thankful and indifferent, so as while I am rich in estate, I may be poor spirit; and while I am poor in estate, I may be rich in grace.

XCI.

Had I been in the streets of Jericho, sure methinks I should have justled with Zaccheus for the sycamore, to see Jesus; and should have blessed my eyes for so happy a prospect: and yet I consider that many a one saw his face on earth, which

[1] Luke, vi. 20. [2] Ib. vi. 24; Mark, x. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 17.
[3] Prov. xxiii. 5. [4] 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. [5] Prov. xxx. 8.

shall never see his glory in heaven; and I hear the apostle say, 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more.'[1] Oh, for the eyes of a Stephen, that 'saw the heavens opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God!'[2] That prospect did as much transcend this of Zaccheus, as heaven is above earth, celestial glory above human infirmity. And why should not the eyes of my faith behold the same object which was seen by Stephen's bodily eyes? I see thee, O Saviour, I see thee, as certainly, though not so clearly. Do thou sharpen and fortify these weak eyes of mine, that in 'thy light I may see light.'[3]

XCII.

How gracious a word was that which God said to Israel, 'I have called thee by thy name,' and 'thou art mine!'[4] He that imposed that name upon Jacob, makes familiar use of it to his posterity. Neither is the case singular, but universally common to all his spiritual issue. There is not one of them whom he doth not both call by his name, and challenge for his own. He that 'tells the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names,'[5] hath also a name for every of these earthly luminaries. He, who brought all other living creatures unto man to see how he would call them, and would make use of Adam's appellation, reserved the naming of man to himself.[6] Neither is there any one of his innumerous posterity, whom he knows not by name. But it is one thing to take notice of their

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16.
[2] Acts, vii. 55, 56.
[3] Psalm, xxxvi. 9.
[4] Isaiah, xliii. 1.
[5] Psalm, cxlvii. 4.
[6] Gen. ii. 19, 20.

names, another thing to call them by their names; that denotes his omniscience; this, his specialty of favour; none are thus graced but the true sons of Israel. As God's children do not content themselves with a confused knowledge of a Deity, but rest not till they have attained a distinct apprehension of their God, as he hath revealed himself to man; so doth God again to them; it is not enough, that he knows them in a general view as in the throng, wherein we see many faces, none distinctly; but he singles them out in a familiar kind of severalty, both of knowledge and respect. As then, he hath names for the several stars of heaven; Cimah, Cesil, Mazzaroth,[1] &c. and for the several angels, Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, &c. and calls them by the proper names which he hath given them; so he doth to every of his faithful ones: of one he saith, 'Thou shalt call his name John;'[2] of another, 'Thou art Simon, thou shalt be called Cephas;'[3] to one he says, 'Zaccheus, come down;'[4] to another, 'Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up.'[5] In short, there is no one of his whom he doth not both know and call by his name. What a comfort is this to a poor wretched man, to think, "Here I walk, obscure and contemptible upon earth, in a condition mean and despised of men; but the great God of heaven is pleased to take such notice of me, as even from heaven to call me by my name, and to single me out for grace and salvation; and not only to mention my name from above, in the gracious offer of his ordinances, but to write it in the eternal register of heaven. What care I to be inglorious,

[1] Job, ix. 9; xxxviii. 31. [2] Luke, i. 13. [3] John, i. 42.
[4] Luke, xix. 5. [5] Acts, x. 3, 4.

yea, causelessly infamous with men, while I am thus honoured by the King of Glory?"

XCIII.

It is the great wisdom and providence of the Almighty, so to order the dispositions and inclinations of men, that they affect divers and different works and pleasures; some are for manuary trades, others for intellectual employments; one is for the land, another for the sea; one for husbandry, another for merchandise; one is for architecture, another for vestiary services;[1] one is for fishing, another for pasturage; and in the learned trades, one is for the mistress of the sciences, divinity; another for the law, whether civil or municipal; a third is for the search of the secrets of nature, and the skill and practice of physic; and each one of these divides itself into many differing varieties. Neither is it otherwise in matter of pleasures: one places his delight in following his hawk and hound, another in the harmony of music; one makes his garden his paradise, and enjoys the flourishing of his fair tulips, another finds contentment in a choice library; one loves his bowl or his bow, another pleases himself in the patient pastime of his angle. For surely, if all men affected one and the same trade of life, or pleasure of recreation, it were not possible that they could live one by another; neither could there be any use of commerce, whereby man's life is maintained; neither could it be avoided but that the envy of the inevitable rivality would cut each other's throats. It is good reason we should make a right use of this gra-

[1] Such occupations as that of a clothier.—Ed.

cious and provident dispensation of the Almighty; and therefore that we should improve our several dispositions and faculties to the advancing of the common stock; and withal, that we should neither encroach upon each other's profession, nor be apt to censure each other's recreation.

XCIV.

He were very quick sighted that could perceive the growing of the grass, or the moving of the shadow upon the dial; yet, when those are done, every eye doth easily discern them. It is no otherwise in the progress of grace; which how it increaseth in the soul and by what degrees, we cannot hope to perceive; but, being grown, we may see it. It is the fault of many Christians, that they depend too much upon sense, and make that the judge of their spiritual estate; being too much dejected, when they do not sensibly feel the proofs of their proficiency, and the present proceedings of their regeneration: why do they not as well question the growth of their stature, because they do not see every day how much they are thriven? Surely, it must needs be that spiritual things are less perceptible than bodily: much more, therefore, must we in these wait upon time for necessary conviction; and well may it suffice us, if, upon an impartial comparing of the present measure of our knowledge, faith, obedience, with the former, we can perceive ourselves any whit sensibly advanced.[1]

[1] The Editor would earnestly recommend these beautiful and sound observations to the attention of those anxious believers who are perplexed about their religious state, for want of that which it is an absurdity to expect, viz. a *sensible* experience of the operation of the Spirit upon the soul. That which is spiritual can never be made the object of sense or sensation. See John, iii. 8.

XCV.

The wise Christian hath learned to value every thing according to its own worth. If we be too glad of these earthly things, it is the way to be too much afflicted with their loss; and, while we have them, to be transported into pride and wantonness: if we esteem them too little, it is the way to an unthankful disrespect of the giver. Christianity carries the heart in a just equipoise; when they come they are welcomed without too much joy; and when they go they part without tears. We may smile at these earthly favours, not laugh out; we may like them, but we must take heed of being in love with them. For love, of what kind soever it be, is not without the power of assimilation: if we love the world, we cannot but be worldly-minded; 'They, that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; and, to be carnally minded, is death:'[1] contrarily, if we love God, we are made partakers of the divine nature, and we are such as we affect. If we be Christians in earnest, certainly the inner rooms of our hearts, which are the holy of holies, are reserved for the Almighty; the outer courts may be for the common resort of lawful cares and desires; they may come and go, but our God shall have his fixed habitation here for ever.

XCVI.

Nature is sly and cunning, neither is it possible to take her without a shift: the light hussy wipes her mouth, and it was not she.[2] Rachael had stolen her father's teraphim; and the custom of women is

[1] Rom. viii. 5, 6. [2] Prov. xxx. 10.

upon her; Saul reserves all the fat cattle of the Amalekites; it is for a sacrifice to the Lord thy God. Neither is it so only in excusing an evil done, but in waving a good to be done: 'I am not eloquent,' saith Moses; 'send by him, by whom thou shouldest send; Pharaoh will kill me:' 'There is a lion in the way,' saith the sluggard;' 'I have married a wife, I cannot come,' saith the sensual guest; 'If I give, I shall want;' 'If I make a strict profession, I shall be censured.' Whereas true grace is, on the one side, downright and ingenuous in its confession; not sparing to take shame to itself, that it may give glory to God; on the other side, resolutely constant to its holy purposes: 'I and my house will serve the Lord;' 'If I perish, I perish;' 'I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' It is not hard, therefore, for us to know what mistress we serve; if our care and endeavour be, by witty evasions to shuffle off both evil and good, we are the vassals of nature; but if we shall with an humble penitence acknowledge our evil, and set ourselves with firm resolutions upon the tasks of good, we are, under grace, in a way to glory.

XCVII.

It is good for a man not always to keep his eyes at home, but sometimes to look abroad at his neighbours, and to compare his own condition with the worse estate of others. I know I deserve no more than the meanest, no better than the worst of men; yet how many do I see and hear, to lie groaning upon their sick beds in great extremity of torment, whereas I walk up and down in a compe-

tency of health! How many do I see ready to famish, and forced to either beg or starve, whereas I eat my own bread! How many lie rotting in gaols and dungeons, or are driven to wander in unknown deserts, or amongst people whose language they understand not; whereas I enjoy home and liberty! How many are shrieking under scourges and racks, whereas I sit at ease! And if I shall cast mine eyes upon my spiritual condition, alas, how many do I see sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; whereas the Sun of Righteousness hath risen to me with healing in his wings![1] How many lie in a woeful bondage under sin and Satan; whereas my Saviour hath freed me from those hellish chains, and brought me to the glorious liberty of the sons of God! How many are miserably misled into the dangerous by-paths of error; whereas he hath graciously kept me in the plain and sure way of his saving truth! If we do not sometimes make these, (not proud, but thankful) comparisons, and look upon ourselves, not with direct beams, but by reflection upon others, we shall never be sensible enough of our own mercies.

XCVIII.

The true Christian is in a very happy condition, for no man will envy him, and he can envy nobody. None will envy him, for the world cannot know how happy he is—how happy in the favour of God; how happy in the enjoying of that favour. Those secret delights that he finds in the presence of his God; those comfortable pledges of love and mutual interchanges of blessed interest which pass between

[1] Mal. iv. 2.

these, are not for worldly hearts to conceive: and to them will carry no [illegible] happiness. On the other side, he cannot envy the world's [illegible] favourite under heaven, for he well knows how brittle and uncertain that man's felicity is; he sees him [illegible] upon ice, and [illegible] he sees [illegible] threatening a fall, and hears that brittle pavement at every step, crackling under him, and ready to give way to his swallowing up; [illegible] within, [illegible], all those pleasures of his are [illegible] mixed and poisoned, [illegible] and [illegible] and how many [illegible] to the end. The Christian [illegible] [illegible] rejoicing to [illegible] in his [illegible], [illegible] no [illegible] he truly happy.

LXI.

It was a high and honourable embassy, wherein the angel Gabriel was sent down to the Blessed Virgin, that she should be the mother of her Saviour; neither was that mission of the glorious angel, that brought the joyful tidings of the incarnation and birth of the Son of God to the shepherds of Bethlehem; but a far more happy errand was that which the Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, committed to the Marys: 'Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.'* Lo, he says not, I am risen, but I ascend; as if he had forgot the earth whereon he arose and thought only on that heaven whither he was going: upon his [illegible] we stand on this Ascension-day. As there

* John xx. 17.

had been nothing but discomfort in death without a resurrection, so there had been little comfort in a resurrection, without an ascension to glory. There is a contentment in the very act, I ascend; even nature is ambitious, and we do all affect to mount higher, as to come down is a death. But this height is, like the ascendant, infinite, 'I ascend to my Father;' there was the glory which he put off in his humble incarnation; there was the glory which he was now to resume and possess to all eternity. And as if nature and adoption could give a like interest, he puts both together: 'My Father and your Father, my God and your God.' His mercy vouchsafes to style us brethren; yet the distance is unmeasurable betwixt him, the Son of his eternal essence and us, the naturally wretched sons of his gracious election; yet, as if both he and we should be coheirs of the same blessedness, though not in the same measure, he says, 'My Father and your Father:' first my Father, then yours; and, indeed, therefore ours, because his. It is in him that we are elected, that we are adopted; without him, God were not only a stranger, but an enemy: it is the Son that must make us free; it is the Son that must make us sons; if we be his the Father cannot but be ours. O, the unspeakable comfort and happiness of a Christian, in respect of his bodily nature! He cannot but say with Job, to the worm, 'Thou art my mother and my sister;'[1] in his spiritual right, God the Son hath here authorized him to say to the Almighty, 'Thou art my Father;' and, in nature, in regard of our frail and dying condition, willingly say, "I descend to the grave."

[1] Job, xvii. 14.

Faith makes abundant amends in him, and can as cheerfully say, 'I ascend to my Father.' And what son, that is not altogether graceless, would not be glad to go to his father, though it were to a meaner house than his own; and therefore is ready to say, "I will descend to my father." How much more, when his many mansions are infinitely glorious, and when all our happiness consists in his blessed presence, must we needs say, with a joy unspeakable and glorious, 'I ascend to my Father!'

C.

God made man the Lord of his creatures; he made him not a tyrant; he gave the creatures to man for his lawful use, not for his wanton cruelty. Man may therefore exercise his just sovereignty over the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea; not his lawless will to their needless destruction or torment. Had man made the creature, he could but challenge an absolute dominion over that work of his hands; but now that he is only a fellow-creature to the meanest worm, what an insolent usurpation is this, so licentiously to domineer over his fellow-dust! Yea, that great God, who gave a being to the creature, and therefore hath a full and illimited power over his own workmanship, takes no pleasure to make use of that power to the unnecessary vexation and torture of what he hath made. That all-wise and bountiful Creator, who hath put into the hands of man the subordinate dominion over all the store of these inferior elements, hath made the limit of his command, not necessity only, but convenience too: but, if man shall go beyond these bounds, and will destroy the creature only because he will, and put it to

pain because it is his pleasure, he abuseth his sovereignty to a sinful imperiousness, and shall be accountable for his cruelty. When the Apostle, upon occasion of the law for not muzzling the mouth of the ox, asks, 'Doth God take care for oxen?'[1] can we think he meant to question the regard for so useful a creature? Do we not hear the Psalmist say, 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that cry.'[2] Do we not hear our Saviour say, 'that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father?'[3] And of how much more value is an ox than many thousands of sparrows! Is not the speech, therefore, both comparative and typical? Is the main care that God takes in that law, for provision to be made for the beast? and doth he not rather, under that figure, give order for the maintenance of those spiritual oxen that labour in the husbandry of the Almighty? Doubtless, as even the savage creatures, 'The young lions seek their meat from God;' so they find it from him in due season: 'He openeth his hand, and filleth every creature with good.'[4] Is God so careful for preserving, and shall man be so licentious in destroying them? 'A righteous man,' saith Solomon, 'regardeth the life of his beast;'[5] he is no better, therefore, than a wicked man that regardeth it not. To offer violence to, and to take away the life from, our fellow-creatures, without a cause, is no less than tyranny. Surely, no other measure should a man offer to his beast than that, which if his beast, with Balaam's, could expostulate with him, he could well justify to it; no other than that man, if he had been

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 9. [2] Psalm cxlvii. 9. [3] Matt. x. 29.
[4] Psalm civ. 21, 27, 28. [5] Prov. xii. 10.

made a beast, would have been content should have been offered by man to him; no other than he shall make account to answer to a common Creator. Justly do we smile at the niceness of the foolish Manichees,[1] who made scruple to pull a herb or flower, and were ready to preface apologies and excuses for the reaping of their corn and grinding the grain they fed upon; as if these vegetables were sensible of pain, and capable of our oppression; but surely for those creatures, which, enjoying a sensitive life, forego it with no less anguish and reluctation than ourselves, and would be as willing to live, without harm, as their owners, they may well challenge both such mercy and justice at our hands, as that in the usage of them we may approve ourselves to their Maker. Wherein I blush and grieve to see how far we are exceeded by Turks and infidels, whom mere nature hath taught more tenderness to the poor brute creatures than we have learned from the holier rules of charitable Christianity. For my part, let me rather affect and applaud the harmless humour of that miscalled saint, who in an indiscreet humility called every wolf his brother, and every sheep, yea, every ant his sister, following himself with every thing that had life in it, as well as himself; than the tyrannical disposition of those men, who take pleasure in the abuse, persecution, destruction of their fellow-creatures, upon no other quarrel, than because they live.

[1] Among many strange tenets of this heretical sect, they held the doctrine of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of the souls of men into the bodies of the inferior animals, and other natures, as a means of expiating their guilt by a lengthened probation. Hence their excessive regard for animal and even vegetable life.—Ed.

AN HOLY RAPTURE;

OR,

A PATHETICAL MEDITATION

ON

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

A MEDITATION

ON THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

SECTION I.

The Love of Christ how passing knowledge; how free, of us, before we were.

What is it, O blessed apostle, what is it, for which thou dost so earnestly bow thy knees, in the behalf of thine Ephesians, unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? even this, that they may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.[1]

Give me leave, first, to wonder at thy suit; and then much more at what thou suest for. Were thine affections raised so high to thine Ephesians, that thou shouldst crave for them impossible favours? Did thy love so far overshoot thy reason, as to pray they might attain to the knowledge of that which cannot be known? It is the love of Christ which thou wishest they may know; and it is that love which thou sayest is past all knowledge. What shall we say to this? Is it, for that there may be holy ambitions of those heights of grace which we can never hope actually to obtain? Or is it rather, that thou supposest and prayest they

[1] Eph. iii. 14, 19.

may reach to the knowledge of that love, the measure whereof they could never aspire to know?

Surely so it is, O blessed Jesu: that thou hast loved us, we know, but how much thou hast loved us is past the comprehension of angels. Those glorious spirits, as they desire to look into the deep mystery of our redemption, so they wonder to behold that divine love whereby it is wrought; but they can no more reach to the bottom of it than they can affect to be infinite; for, surely, no less than an endless line can serve to fathom a bottomless depth. Such, O Saviour, is the abyss of thy love to miserable man. Alas! what do we poor wretched dust of the earth go about to measure it, by the spans and inches of our shallow thoughts? Far, far be such presumption from us: only admit us, O blessed Lord, to look at, to admire and adore that which we give up for incomprehensible.

What shall we then say to this love, O dear Jesu; both as thine, and as cast upon us? All earthly love supposeth some kind of equality, or proportion at least, betwixt the person that loves, and him that is loved: here is none at all. So as, which is past wonder, extremes meet without a mean; for, lo, thou, who art the eternal and absolute Being, God blessed for ever, lovedst me, that had no being at all: thou lovedst me, both when I was not, and could never have been but by thee. It was from thy love that I had any being at all; much more, that, when thou hadst given me a being, thou shouldst follow me with succeeding mercies. Who but thou, who art infinite in goodness, would love that which is not? Our poor sensual love is drawn from us by the sight of a face or picture, neither is ever raised but upon some pleasing motive:

thou wouldst make that which thou wouldst love; and wouldst love that which thou hadst made. O God, was there ever love so free, so gracious, as this of thine? Who can be capable to love us, but men or angels? Men love us because they see something in us which they think amiable; angels love us because thou doest so; but why dost thou, O blessed Lord, love us, but because thou wouldst? There can be no cause of thy will, which is the cause of all things. Even so, Lord, since this love did rise only from thee, let the praise and glory of it rest only in thee.

SECTION II.

How free, of us, that had made ourselves vile and miserable.

YET more, Lord, we had lost ourselves, before we were; and, having forfeited what we should be, had made ourselves perfectly miserable. Even when we were worse than nothing, thou wouldst love us.

Was there ever any eye enamoured of deformity? Can there be any bodily deformity comparable to that of sin? Yet, Lord, when sin had made us abominably loathsome, didst thou cast thy love upon us. A little scurf of leprosy, or but some unsavoury scent, sets us off, and turns our love into detestation. But, for thee, O God, when we were become as foul and as ugly as sin could make us, even then was thy love enflamed towards us; even when we were weltering in our blood, thou saidst, "Live;" and washedst, and anointedst us, and clothedst us with a broidered work, and deckedst us with ornaments,

and graciously espousedst us to thyself, and receivdest us into thine own bosom. 'Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou thus visitest him?' Oh, what are we, in comparison of thy once glorious angels? They sinned and fell, never to be recovered; never to be loosed from those everlasting chains, wherein they are reserved to the judgment of the great day. Whence is it, then, O Saviour, whence is it, that thou hast shut up thy mercy from those thy more excellent creatures, and hast extended it to us vile sinful dust? Whence, but that thou wouldst love man because thou wouldst?

Alas! it is discouragement enough to our feeble friendship, that he, to whom we wished well is miserable. Our love doth gladly attend upon and enjoy his prosperity: but, when his estate is utterly sunk, and his person exposed to contempt and ignominy, yea to torture and death, who is there that will then put forth himself to own a forlorn and perishing friend? But for thee, O blessed Jesu, so ardent was thy love to us, that it was not in the power of our extreme misery to abate it; yea, so as that the deploredness of our condition did but heighten that holy flame. What speak I of shame or sufferings? hell itself could not keep thee off from us; even from that pit of eternal perdition didst thou fetch our condemned souls, and hast contrarily vouchsafed to put us into a state of everlasting blessedness.

SECTION III.

How yet free, of us that were professed enemies.

The common disposition of men pretends to a kind of justice, in giving men their own; so as they will repay love for love, and think they may for hatred return enmity. Nature itself then teacheth us to love our friends; it is only grace that can love an enemy.

But, as of injuries, so of enmities thereupon grounded, there are certain degrees: some are slight and trivial, some main and capital. If a man do but scratch my face, or give some light dash to my fame, it is no great mastery upon submission to receive such an offender to favour; but, if he have endeavoured to ruin my estate, to wound my reputation, to cut my throat; not only to pardon this man, but to hug him in my arms, to lodge him in my bosom as my entire friend, this would be no other than a high improvement of my charity.

O Lord Jesu, what was I, but the worst of enemies, when thou vouchsafedst to embrace me with thy loving mercy? How had I shamefully rebelled against thee; and yielded up all my members as instruments of unrighteousness and sin![1] how had I crucified thee, the Lord of life! how had I done little other, than trod under foot the blessed Son of God; and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing! how had I, in some

[1] The pious writer must be supposed to personify mankind—the human race in general—as in a state of rebellion against God; not to apply the whole force of his language to the case of every individual.—Ed.

sort, done despite unto the Spirit of grace! yet, even then, in despite of all my most odious unworthiness, didst thou spread thine arms to receive me; yea, thou openedst thy heart to let me in. O love, passing not knowledge only, but wonder also! O mercy, not incident into any thing less comprehensible.

SECTION IV.

The wonderful effects of the Love of Christ—His Incarnation.

But, O dear Lord, when, from the object of thy mercy I cast mine eyes upon the effects and improvement of thy divine favours, and see what thy love hath drawn from thee towards the sons of men, how am I lost in a just amazement! It is that which fetched thee down from the glory of the highest heavens; from the bosom of thine eternal Father to this lower world, the region of sorrow and death. It is that which, to the wonder of angels, clothed thee with this flesh of ours; and brought thee, who thoughtest it no robbery to be equal with God, to an estate lower than thine own creatures.

O mercy, transcending the admiration of all the glorious spirits of heaven, that God would be incarnate! Surely, that all those celestial powers should be redacted to either worms or nothing, that all this goodly frame of creation should run back into its first confusion, or be reduced to one single atom, it is not so high a wonder, as for God to become man: those changes, though the highest nature is capable

of, are yet but of things finite; this is of an infinite subject, with which the most excellent of finite things can hold no proportion. Oh, the great mystery of godliness; God manifested in the flesh, and seen of angels! Those heavenly spirits had, ever since they were made, seen his most glorious Deity, and adored him as their omnipotent Creator; but, to see that God of Spirits invested with flesh, was such a wonder as had been enough, if their nature could have been capable of it, to have astonished even glory itself; and whether to see him that was their God so humbled below themselves, or to see humanity thus advanced above themselves, were the greater wonder to them, they only know.

It was your foolish misprision,[1] O ye ignorant Lystrians, that you took the servants for the Master: here only is it verified, which you supposed, that God is come down to us in the likeness of man, and as man conversed with men.

What a disparagement do we think it was for the great monarch of Babylon, for seven years together as a beast to converse with the beasts of the field! yet, alas! beasts and men are fellow-creatures;[2] made of one earth; drawing in the same air; returning, for their bodily part, to the same dust; symbolizing in many qualities, and in some mutually transcending each others': so as here may

[1] Mistake.—Ed.

[2] The bold language of Young—

"Midway from nothing to the Deity"—

more correctly expresses the union of the natural and the supernatural in man. It is only by wilfully yielding himself to the modifying influences of a corrupt nature, out of which it is his duty to seek emancipation, that man sinks so near to the beast as is here represented.—Ed.

seem to be some terms of a tolerable proportion; since many men are in disposition too like unto beasts, and some beasts are in outward shape somewhat like unto men: but for him that was, and is, 'God blessed for ever,' eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, to put on flesh, and become a man amongst men, was to stoop below all possible disparities that heaven and earth can afford. O Saviour, the lower thine abasement was for us, the higher was the pitch of thy divine love to us.

SECTION V.

His Love, in his Sufferings.

YET, in this our human condition there are degrees: one rules and glitters in all earthly glory, another sits despised in the dust; one passes the time of his life in much jollity and pleasure, another wears out his days in sorrow and discontentment. Blessed Jesu, since thou wouldst be a man, why wouldst thou not be the king of men? Since thou wouldst come down to our earth, why wouldst thou not enjoy the best entertainment the earth could yield thee? Yea, since thou who art the eternal Son of God wouldst be the son of man, why didst thou not appear in a state like to the King of heaven, attended with the glorious retinue of angels? O yet greater wonder of mercies, the same infinite love that brought thee down to the form of man, would also bring thee down, being man, to the form of a servant! So didst thou love man, that thou wouldst take part with him of his misery, that he

might take part with thee of thy blessedness; thou wouldst be poor to enrich us, thou wouldst be burthened for our ease, tempted for our victory, despised for our glory.

With what less than ravishment of spirit can I behold thee, who wert from everlasting clothed with glory and majesty, wrapped in rags! thee, who fillest heaven and earth with the majesty of thy glory, cradled in a manger! thee, who art the God of power, fleeing in thy mother's arms from the rage of a weak man! thee, who art the God of Israel, driven to be nursed out of the bosom of thy church! thee, who madest the heaven of heavens, busily working in the homely trade of a foster-father! thee, who commandest the devils to their chains, transported and tempted with that foul spirit! thee, who art God all-sufficient, exposed to hunger, thirst, weariness, danger, contempt, poverty, revilings, scourgings, persecution! thee, who art the just Judge of all the world, accused and condemned! thee, who art the Lord of life, dying upon the tree of shame and curse! thee, who art the eternal Son of God, struggling with thy Father's wrath! thee, who hast said, 'I and my Father are one,' sweating drops of blood in thine agony, and crying out on the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' thee, who hast the keys of hell and of death, lying sealed up in another man's grave!

O Saviour, whither hath thy love to mankind carried thee? What sighs, and groans, and tears, and blood hast thou spent upon us wretched men! How dear a price hast thou paid for our ransom! What raptures of spirit can be sufficient for the admiration of thy so infinite mercy? Be thou

swallowed up, O my soul, in this depth of divine love; and hate to spend thy thoughts any more upon the base objects of this wretched world, when thou hast such a Saviour to take them up.

SECTION VI.

His Love, in preparing Heaven for us.

But, O blessed Jesu, if, from what thou hast suffered for me, I shall cast mine eyes upon what thou hast done for my soul, how is my heart divided betwixt the wonders of both! and may as soon tell how great either of them is, as whether of them is the greatest.

It is in thee that I was elected from all eternity, and ordained to a glorious inheritance before there was a world. We are wont, O God, to marvel at and bless thy provident beneficence to the first man; that before thou wouldst bring him forth into the world, thou wert pleased to furnish such a world for him, so goodly a house over his head, so pleasant a paradise under his feet, such variety of creatures round about him for his subjection and attendance. But how should I magnify thy mercy, who, before that man or that world had any being, has so far loved me as to pre-ordain me to a place of blessedness in that heaven which should be, and to make me a coheir with my Christ of thy glory!

And, oh, what a heaven is this that thou hast laid out for me; how resplendent, how transcendently glorious! Even that lower paradise, which thou

providest for the harbour of innocence and holiness, was full of admirable beauty, pleasure, magnificence; but if it be compared with this paradise above, which thou hast prepared for the everlasting entertainment of restored souls, how mean and beggarly it was! O match too unequal, of the best piece of earth with the highest state of the heaven of heavens! In the earthly paradise I find thine angels the cherubim, but it was to keep man off from that garden of delight, and from the tree of life in the midst of it; but in this heavenly one I find millions of thy cherubim and seraphim rejoicing at man's blessedness, and welcoming the glorified souls to their heaven. There I find but the shadow of that whereof the substance is here. There we were so possessed of life that yet we might forfeit it; here is life without all possibility of death. Temptation could find access thither; here is nothing but a free and complete fruition of blessedness. There were delights fit for earthly bodies; here is glory more than can be enjoyed of blessed souls. That was watered with four streams, muddy and impetuous; in this is 'the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.'[1] There I find thee only walking in the cool of the day; here, manifesting thy majesty continually. There I see only a most pleasant orchard,[2] set with all manner of varieties of flourishing and fruitful plants; here I find also the city of God, infinitely rich and magnificent, the building of the wall of it of jasper, and the city itself pure gold, like unto clear glass, and the foundations

[1] Rev. xxii. 1.—Ed.

[2] Gardens were commonly so called in our author's time: they were, indeed, scarcely any thing else.—Ed.

of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones.

All that I can here attain to see is the pavement of thy celestial habitation. And, Lord, how glorious it is! how bespangled with the glittering stars; for number, for magnitude equally admirable! What is the least of them but a world of light? and what are all of them but a confluence of so many thousand worlds of beauty and brightness met in one firmament? And if this floor of thy heavenly palace be thus richly set forth, oh, how infinite glory and magnificence must there needs be within! Thy chosen vessel, that had the privilege to be caught up thither, and to see that divine state, whether with bodily or mental eyes, can express it no otherwise than that it cannot possibly be expressed. No, Lord, it were not infinite if it could be uttered. Thoughts go beyond words; yet even these come far short also. He that saw it says, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'[1]

SECTION VII.

His Love, in our Redemption from death and hell.

YET is thy love, O Saviour, so much more to be magnified of me in this purchased glory, when I cast down mine eyes and look into that horrible gulf of torment and eternal death whence thou hast rescued my poor soul. Even out of the greatest

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 9.

contentment which this world is capable to afford unto mankind, to be preferred to the joys of heaven is an unconceivable advantage; but, from the depth of misery, to be raised up unto the highest pitch of felicity, adds so much more to the blessing, as the evil from which we are delivered is more intolerable.

O blessed Jesu, what a hell is this out of which thou hast freed me! what dreadful horror is here! what darkness! what confusion! what anguish of souls, that would, and cannot die! what howling, and yelling, and shrieking, and gnashing! what everlasting burnings! what never-slacking tortures! what merciless fury of unwearable tormentors! what utter despair of any possibility of release! what exquisiteness, what infiniteness of pains, that cannot, yet must be endured! O God, if the impotent displeasure of weak men have devised so subtle engines of revenge upon their fellow-mortals for but petty offences, how can we but think thine infinite justice and wisdom must have ordained such forms and ways of punishment for heinous sins done against thee, as may be answerable to the violation of thy divine Majesty? Oh, therefore, the most fearful and deplored condition of damned spirits, never to be ended, never to be abated! Oh, those unquenchable flames! Oh, that burning Tophet, deep and large, and those streams of brimstone wherewith it is kindled! Oh, that worm, ever gnawing and tearing the heart, never dying, never sated! O ever living death; O ever renewing torments; O never pitied, never intermitted damnation! From hence, O Saviour, from hence it is that thou hast fetched my condemned soul. This is the

place, this is the state, out of which thou hast snatched me up into thy heaven. O love and mercy, more deep than those depths from which thou hast saved me, more high than that heaven to which thou hast advanced me!

SECTION VIII.

Christ's Love, in giving us the Guard of his Angels.

Now, whereas in my passage from this state of death towards the fruition of immortal glory, I am waylaid by a world of dangers, partly through my own sinful aptness to miscarriages, and partly through the assaults of my spiritual enemies; how hath thy tender love and compassion, O blessed Jesu, undertaken to secure my soul from all these deadly perils, both without and within: without, by the guardiance of thy blessed angels; within, by the powerful inoperation of thy good Spirit which thou has given me!

Oh, that mine eyes could be opened, with Elisha's servant, that I might see those troops of heavenly soldiers, those horses and chariots of fire, wherewith thou hast encompassed me! every one of which is able to chase away a whole host of the powers of darkness.

Who am I, Lord, who am I, that upon thy gracious appointment these glorious spirits should still watch over me, in mine up-rising and down-lying, in my going out and coming in; that they should bear me in their arms, that they should shield me with their protection? Behold, such is their ma-

jesty and glory that some of thy holiest servants have hardly been restrained from worshipping them; yet, so great is thy love to man, as that thou hast ordained them to be 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.'[1] Surely they are in nature far more excellent than man, as being spiritual substances, pure intelligencers, meet to stand before the throne of thee, the King of Glory; what a mercy then is this, that thou, who wouldst humble thyself to be lower than they in the susception of our nature, art pleased to humble them in their offices to the guardianship of man, so far as to call them the angels of thy little ones upon earth! How hast thou blessed us, and how should we bless thee in so mighty and glorious attendants!

SECTION IX.

His Love in giving us his Holy Spirit.

Neither hast thou, O God, merely turned us over to the protection of those tutelary spirits; but hast held us still in thine own hand; having not so strongly defenced us without, as thou hast done within; since that is wrought by thine angels, this by the Spirit.

O the sovereign and powerful influences of thy Holy Ghost; whereby we are furnished with all saving graces; strengthened against all temptations;

[1] Heb. i. 14.—Ed.

heartened against all our doubts and fears; enabled both to resist and overcome; and, upon our victories, crowned. O divine bounty, far beyond the reach of wonder! 'So God' the Father 'loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'[1] So God the Son loved the world of his elect, that he gave unto them the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption; whereby, according to the riches of his glory, they are strengthened with might in the inner man; by the virtue whereof shed abroad in their hearts, they are enabled to cry Abba, Father. O gifts, either of which are more worth than many worlds; yet, through thy goodness, O Lord, both of them mine. How rich is my soul, through thy divine munificence, how overlaid with mercies! How safe in thine almighty tuition! How happy in thy blessed possession!

Now, therefore, I dare, in the might of my God, bid defiance to all the gates of hell. Do your worst, O all ye principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, do your worst; God is mine, and I am his: I am above your malice, in the right of him whose I am. It is true, I am weak, but he is omnipotent; I am sinful, but he is infinite holiness: that power, that holiness, in his gracious application, is mine.

It is my Saviour's love, that hath made this happy exchange, of his righteousness for my sin; of his power for my infirmity. 'Who,' then, 'shall lay

[1] John, iii. 16.

any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us:' so as 'neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'[1]

Lo, where this love is placed: were it our love of God, how easily might the power of a prevalent temptation separate us from it, or it from us! For, alas! what hold is to be taken of our affections; which, like unto water, are so much more apt to freeze, because they have been heated? but it is the love of God to us in Christ Jesus, which is ever as himself, constant and eternal. He can no more cease to love us than to be himself: he cannot but be unchangeable; we cannot but be happy.

SECTION X.

Our sense and improvement of Christ's Love, in all the former particulars; and, first, in respect of the inequality of the Persons.

All this, O dear Jesu, hast thou done, all this hast thou suffered, for men. And, oh, now for a heart that may be some ways answerable to thy mercies!

[1] Rom. viii. 33, &c.

Surely, even good natures hate to be in debt for love, and are ready to repay favours with interest.

Oh, for a soul sick of love, yea, sick unto death! Why should I, how can I, be any otherwise, any whit less affected, O Saviour? This only sickness is my health; this death is my life; and not to be thus sick, is to be dead in sins and trespasses. I am rock, and not flesh, if I be not wounded with these heavenly darts. Ardent affection is apt to attract love, even where is little or no beauty; and excellent beauty is no less apt to inflame the heart, where there is no answer of affection; but when these two meet together, what breast can hold against them? and here they are both in an eminent degree. Thou canst say even of thy poor Church, though labouring under many imperfections, 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck: how fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!'[1] And canst thou, O blessed Saviour, be so taken with the incurious and homely features of thy faithful ones, and shall not we much more be altogether enamoured of thine absolute and divine beauty? of whom every believing soul can say, 'My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest among ten thousand: his head is as the most fine gold: his eyes are as the eyes of doves, by the rivers of waters: his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, &c.'[2] It hath pleased thee, O Lord, out of the sweet ravishments of thy heavenly love, to say to thy poor Church, "Turn away thine eyes from

[1] Cant. iv. 9. [2] Ib. v. 10, &c.

me, for they have overcome me:' but, oh, let me say unto thee, "Turn thine eyes to me, that they may overcome me:" I would be thus ravished, thus overcome: I would be thus out of myself, that I might be all in thee.

Thou lovedst me, before I had being: let me, now that I have a being, be wholly taken up with thy love; let me set all my soul upon thee, that gavest me being; upon thee, who art the eternal and absolute Self-Being; who hast said, and only couldst say, 'I am that I am.' Alas! Lord, we are nothing, but what thou wilt have us; and cease to be, when thou callest in that breath of life which thou hast lent us: thou art that incomprehensible glorious, and infinite self-existing Spirit, from eternity, in eternity, to eternity; in and from whom all things are. It is thy wonderful mercy, that thou wouldst condescend so low, as to vouchsafe to be loved of my wretchedness, of whom thou mightest justly require and expect nothing but terror and trembling. It is my happiness, that I may be allowed to love a Majesty so infinitely glorious. Oh, let me not be so far wanting to my own felicity, as to less than ravished with thy love.

SECTION XI.

A further enforcement of our Love to Christ, in respect of our Unworthiness and his Sufferings and prepared Glory.

THOU lovedst me when I was deformed, loathly, forlorn, and miserable; shall I not now love thee

when thou hast freed me, and decked me with the ornaments of thy graces? Lord Jesu, who should enjoy the fruit of thine own favours, but thyself? How shamefully injurious were it, that, when thou hast trimmed up my soul, it should prostitute itself to the love of the world! Oh, take my heart to thee alone; possess thyself of that which none can claim but thyself.

Thou lovedst me when I was a professed rebel against thee; and receivedst me, not to mercy only, but to the endearment of a subject, a servant, a son; where should I place the improvement of the thankful affections of my loyalty and duty, but upon thee?

Thou, O God, hast so loved us, that thou wouldst become the Son of man for our sakes; that we, who are the sons of men, might become the sons of God. Oh, that we could put off the man, to put on Christ; that we could neglect and hate ourselves for thee, that hast so dearly loved us, as to lay aside thy heavenly glory for us!

How shall I be vile enough, O Saviour, for thee; who, for my sake, being the Lord of life and glory, wouldst take upon thee the shape of a servant! How should I welcome that poverty which thy choice hath sanctified! How resolutely shall I grapple with the temptations of that enemy whom thou hast foiled for me! How cheerfully should I pass through those miseries and that death which thou hast sweetened! With what comfortable assurance shall I look upon the face of that merciful justice which thou hast satisfied! But, oh, what a blessed inheritance hast thou, in thine infinite love provided for me! 'an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not

away, reserved in heaven for me; so as when my earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'[1] A house? Yea, a palace of heavenly state and magnificence. Neither is it less than a kingdom, that abides there for me; a kingdom so much more above these worldly monarchies, as heaven is above this clod of earth.

Now, Lord, what conceits, what affections of mind can be in the least sort answerable to so transcendent mercy? If some friend shall have been pleased to bestow some mean legacy upon me, or shall have feoffed[2] me in some few acres of his land, how deeply do I find myself obliged to the love and memory of so kind a benefactor! O then, Lord, how can my soul be capable of those thoughts and dispositions, which may reach to the least proportion of thine infinite bounty; who, of a poor worm on earth, hast made me an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

Woe is me, how subject are these earthly principalities to hazard and mutability, whether through death or insurrection! but this crown which thou hast laid up for me is immarcescible;[3] and shall sit immovably fast upon my head, not for years, nor for millions of ages, but for all eternity. Oh, let it be my heaven here below, in the mean while, to live in a perpetual fruition of thee; and to begin those hallelujahs to thee here, which shall be as endless as thy mercy and my blessedness.

[1] 1 Pet. i. 4; 2 Cor. v. 1. [2] Given in possession.—Ed.
[3] Unfading.—Ed.

SECTION XII.

The improvement of our Love to Christ for the mercy of his Deliverance, of the Tuition[1] of his Angels, of the powerful working of his Good Spirit.

HADST thou been pleased to have translated me from thy former paradise, the most delightful seat of man's original integrity and happiness, to the glory of the highest heaven, the preferment had been infinitely gracious; but to bring my soul from the nethermost hell, and to place it among the choir of angels, doubles the thank of thy mercy, and the measure of my obligation. How thankful was thy prophet[2] but to an Ebedmelech, that, by a cord and rags let down into that dark dungeon, helped him out of that uncomfortable pit wherein he was lodged; yet, what was there, but a little cold, hunger, stench, closeness, obscurity? Lord, how should I bless thee, that hast fetched my soul from that pit of eternal horror, from that lake of fire and brimstone, from the everlasting torments of the damned, wherein I had deserved to perish for ever? I will sing of thy power unto thee, O my strength, will I sing; for God is my deliverer, and the God of my mercy.

But, O Lord, if yet thou shouldst leave me in my own hands, where were I? How easily should I be robbed of thee, with every temptation? How should I be made the scorn and insultation[3] of men and devils! It is thy wonderful mercy, that thou

[1] Guardianship.—ED. [2] Jer. xxxviii. [3] Mockery.—ED.

hast given thine angels charge over me. Those angels, great in power and glorious in majesty, are my sure, though invisible, guard. O blessed Jesu, what an honour, what a safety is this, that those heavenly spirits, which attend thy throne, should be my champions! Those that ministered to thee after thy temptation, are ready to assist and relieve me in mine. They can neither neglect their charge, because they are perfectly holy, nor fail of their victory because they are, under thee, the most powerful. I see you, O ye blessed guardians, I see you by the eye of my faith, no less truly than the eye of my sense sees my bodily attendants; I do truly, though spiritually feel your presence, by your gracious operations in, upon, and for me; and I do heartily bless my God and yours, for you, and for those saving offices, that through his merciful appointment, you ever do for my soul.

But, as it was with thine Israelites of old, that it would not content them, that thou promisedst and wouldst send thine angel before, to bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, unless thy presence, O Lord, should go also along with them; so is it still with me and all thine; wert not thou with and in us, what could thine angels do for us? In thee it is that they move and are. The same infinite Spirit which works in and by them, works also in me. From thee it is, O thou blessed and eternal Spirit, that I have any stirrings of holy motions and breathings of good desires, any life of grace, any will to resist, any power to overcome evil. It is thou, O God, 'that girdest me with strength unto battle; thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation; thy right hand hath holden me up; thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies.'

Glory and praise be to thee, O Lord, 'which always causest us to triumph in Christ; who crownest us with loving kindness and tender mercies,' and hast not held us short of the best of thy favours.

Truly, Lord, hadst thou given us but a mere being, as thou hast done to the lowest rank of thy creatures, it had been more than thou owest us, more than ever we could be able to requite to thy divine bounty; for every being is good, and the least degree of good is far above our worthiness. But, that to our being thou hast added life, it is yet a higher measure of thy mercy; for, certainly, of thy common favours, life is the most precious. Yet this is such a benefit as may be had and not perceived; for even the plants of the earth live and feel it not: that to our life, therefore, thou hast made a further accession of sense, it is yet a larger improvement of thy beneficence; for this faculty hath some power to manage life, and makes it capable to affect those means which may tend to the preservation of it, and to decline the contrary. But this is no other than the brute creatures enjoy equally with us, and some of them beyond us: that, therefore, to our sense thou hast blessed us with a further addition of reason, it is yet a higher pitch of munificence; for hereby we are men, and as such, are able to attain some knowledge of thee, our Creator, to observe the motions of the heavens, to search into the natures of our fellow-creatures, to pass judgment upon actions and events, and to transact these earthly affairs to our own best advantage.

But, when all this is done, woe were to us, if we were but men! for our corrupted reason renders us, of all creatures, the most miserable: that, there-

fore, to our reason thou hast superadded faith, to our nature grace, and of men hast made us Christians, and to us, as such, hast given thy Christ, thy Spirit; and thereby made us, of enemies, sons and heirs, coheirs with Christ of thine eternal and most glorious kingdom of heaven; yea, hast incorporated us into thyself, and made us one spirit with thee our God;—Lord, what room can there be possibly, in these strait and narrow hearts of ours, for a due admiration of thy transcendent love and mercy?

I am swallowed up, O God, I am willingly swallowed up, in this bottomless abyss of thine infinite love; and there let me dwell, in a perpetual ravishment of spirit, till, being freed from this clog of earth, and filled with the fulness of Christ, I shall be admitted to enjoy that which I cannot now reach to wonder at, thine incomprehensible bliss and glory which thou hast laid up in the highest heavens for them that love thee, in the blessed communion of all thy saints and angels, thy cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, and principalities, and powers; in the beatifical presence of thee, the ever-living God, the eternal Father of spirits, Father, Son, Holy Ghost, One infinite Deity in Three, co-essentially, co-eternally, co-equally, glorious persons: to whom be blessing, honour, glory, and power, for ever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah.

THE SOUL'S FAREWELL TO EARTH,

AND

APPROACHES TO HEAVEN.

THE SOUL'S FAREWELL TO EARTH,

AND

APPROACHES TO HEAVEN.

SECTION I.

Be thou ever, O my soul, holily ambitious, always aspiring towards thy heaven, not entertaining any thought that makes not towards blessedness. For this cause, therefore, put thyself upon thy wings, and leave the earth below thee; and, when thou art advanced above this inferior world, look down upon this globe of wretched mortality, and despise what thou wast and hadst; and think with thyself: "There was I, not a sojourner so much as prisoner for some tedious years; there have I been thus long tugging with my miseries, with my sins; there have my treacherous senses betrayed me to infinite evils, both done and suffered. How have I been there tormented with the sense of others' wickedness, but more of my own! what insolence did I see in men of power! what rage in men of blood! what gross superstition in the ignorant! what abominable sacrilege in those that would be zealous! what drunken revellings, what sodomitical filthiness, what hellish profanations in atheous ruf-

fians! what perfidiousness in friendship, what cozenage in contracts, what cruelty in revenges, shortly, what a hell upon earth! Farewell, then, sinful world, whose favours have been no other than snares, and whose frowns no less than torments; farewell for ever: for, if my flesh cannot yet clear itself of thee, yet my spirit shall ever know thee at a distance, and behold thee no otherwise than the escaped mariner looks back upon the rock whereon he was lately splitted. Let thy bewitched clients adore thee for a deity: all the homage thou shalt receive from me shall be no other than defiance; and, if thy glorious shows have deluded the eyes of credulous spectators, I know thee for an impostor. Deceive, henceforth, those that trust thee; for me, I am out of the reach of thy fraud, out of the power of thy malice."

Thus do thou, O my soul, when thou art raised up to this height of thy fixed contemplation, cast down thine eyes contemptuously upon the region of thy former miseries, and be sure ever to keep up in a constant ascent towards blessedness; not suffering thyself to stoop any more upon these earthly vanities. For, tell me seriously, when the world was disposed to court thee most of all, what did it yield thee but unsound joys, sauced with a deep anguish of spirit; false hopes, shutting up in a heart-breaking disappointment; windy proffers, mocking thee with sudden retractions; bitter pills in sugar; poison in a golden cup? It showed thee, perhaps, stately palaces, but stuffed with cares; fair and populous cities, but full of toil and tumult; flourishing churches, but annoyed with schism and sacrilege; rich treasures, but kept by ill spirits; pleasing beauties, but baited with temptation; glorious

titles, but surcharged with pride; goodly semblances, with rotten insides; in short, death disguised with pleasures and profits.

If, therefore, heretofore, thy unexperience have suffered thy feathers to be belimed with these earthly entanglements; yet, now that thou hast happily cast those plumes and quit thyself of these miserable incumbrances, thou mayest soar aloft above the sphere of mortality, and be still towering up towards thy heaven; and, as those that have ascended to the top of some Athos or Teneriff, see all things below them in the valleys small, and scarce in their diminution discernible; so shall all earthly objects, in thy spiritual exaltation, seem unto thee: either thou shalt not see them at all, or at least so lessened, as that they have to thee quite lost all the proportion of their former dimensions.

SECTION II.

It will not be long, O my soul, ere thou shalt absolutely leave the world in the place of thy habitation; being carried up by the blessed angels to thy rest and glory; but, in the mean time, thou must resolve to leave it in thy thoughts and affections. Thou mayest have power over these even before the hour of thy separation; and these, rightly disposed, have power to exempt thee beforehand from the interest of this inferior world, and to advance thine approaches to that world of the blessed. While thou art confined to this clay, there is naturally a luggage of carnality that hangs heavy upon thee,

and sways thee down to the earth; not suffering thee to mount upward to that bliss whereunto thou aspirest: this must be shaken off if thou wouldst attain to any capacity of happiness; even in this sense, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' It behoves thee to be, so far as this composition will admit, spiritualized, ere thou canst hope to attain to any degree of blessedness.

Thy conjunction with the body doth necessarily clog thee with an irrational part, which will unavoidably force upon thee some operations of its own; and thy senses will be interposing themselves in all thy intellectual employments, proffering thee the service of their guidance in all thy proceedings; but, if thou lovest eternity of blessedness, shake them off as importunate suitors; gather up thyself into thy own regenerated powers, and do thy work without and above them. It is enough, that thou hast, at first, taken some hint from them, of what concerns thee; as for the rest, cast them off as unnecessary and impertinent, the prosecution whereof is too high and too internal for them to intermeddle with. Thou hast now divine and heavenly things in chase, whereof there cannot be the least scent in any of these earthly faculties. Divest thyself, therefore, what thou possibly mayest, of all materiality, both of objects and apprehensions; and let thy pure, renewed, and illuminated intellect work only upon matter spiritual and celestial.

And, above all, propose unto thyself and dwell upon that purest, perfectest, simplest, blessedest object, the glorious and incomprehensible Deity; there thou shalt find more than enough to take up thy thoughts to all eternity. Be thou, O my soul, ever swallowed up in the consideration of that in-

finite self-being Essence, whom all created spirits are not capable sufficiently to admire. Behold, and never cease wondering at the majesty of his glory. The bodily eyes dazzle at the sight of the sun; but, if there were as many suns as there are stars in the firmament of heaven, their united splendour were but darkness to their all-glorious Creator. Thou canst not yet hope to see him as he is; but, lo, thou beholdest where he dwells, in light inaccessible, the sight of whose very outward verge is enough to put thee into a perpetual ecstasy. It is not for thee, as yet, to strive to enter within the vail; thine eyes may not be free where the angels hide their faces. What thou wantest in sight, O my soul, supply in wonder. Never any mortal man, O God, durst sue to see thy face, save that one entire servant of thine, whose face thy conference had made shining and radiant; but even he, though inured to thy presence, was not capable to behold such glory and live. Far be it from me, O Lord, to presume so high. Only let me see thee as thou hast bidden me; and but so, as not to behold thee after thy gracious revelation, were my sin. Let me see, even in this distance, some glimmering of thy divine power, wisdom, justice, mercy, truth, providence; and let me bless and adore thee in what I see.

SECTION III.

Oh, the infiniteness of thine Almighty power, which thou not hast, but art, beyond the possibility of all limitations of objects or thoughts. In

as, poor finite creatures, our power comes short of our will: many things we fain would do, but cannot; and great pity it were, that there should not be such a restraint upon our unruly appetites, which would otherwise work out the destruction both of others and ourselves. But, O God, thy power is beyond thy will; thou canst do more than thou wilt; thou couldst have made more worlds, when thou madest this one; and even this one, which thou hast made, Lord, how glorious a one it is! Lo, there needs no other demonstration of thine omnipotence.

Oh, what a heaven is this, which thou hast canopied over our heads! how immensely capacious! how admirably beautiful! how bestudded with goodly globes of light! some one whereof hath in it such unspeakable glory, as that there have not wanted nations, and those not of the savagest, which have mis-worshipped it for their God; and, if thou hadst made but one of these in thy firmament, thy workmanship had been above our wonder; for even this had surpassed the whole frame of this lower world. But now, as their quality strives with their greatness, so their magnitude strives with their number, which of them shall more magnify the praise of their almighty Creator; and these three are no less than matched, by the constant regularity of the perpetual motion of those mighty bodies, which having walked their daily rounds about the world above this five thousand six hundred and sixty years, yet are so ordered by thy inviolable decree, that they have not varied one inch from their appointed line, but keep their due course and just distance each from other; although not fixed in any solid orb, but moving singly in a thin

and yielding sky, to the very same point whence they set forth.

And, if the bodily and visible part of thy heavenly host, O God, be thus unconceivably glorious, where shall we find room to wonder at those spiritual and living powers, which inhabit those celestial mansions, and attend upon the throne of thy Majesty; the thousand thousands of thy blessed angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, thrones, principalities, dominions, which in thy presence enjoy a bliss next to infinite; any one of which, if we could see him, were enough to kill us with his glory? Not one of those millions of mighty spirits, but were able to destroy a world. Oh, then, how infinitely transcendent is that power of thine, which hast both created all this heavenly hierarchy, and so movest in them, that only in and by thee they are thus potent!

Yea, Lord, let me but cast mine eyes down to this earth I tread upon, and view thy wonders in the deep, how manifestly do these proclaim thy divine omnipotence! When I see this vast globe of earth and waters, dreadfully hanging in the midst of a liquid air, upheld by nothing but by thy powerful word; when I see the rage of the swelling waves, naturally higher than the shores they beat upon, restrained to their bounds by thine overruling command; when I see the earth beautifully garnished with marvellous variety of trees, herbs, flowers, richly stuffed with precious metals, stones, minerals; when I see, besides a world of men, the numberless choice and differences of the substance, forms, colours, dispositions, of beasts, fowls, fishes, wherewith these lower elements are

peopled; how can I be but dissolved into wonder of thine almighty power?

SECTION IV.

NEITHER is thy power, O God, either more, or more thyself, than thy wisdom; which is no less essential to thee than infinite. What have we to do, silly and shallow wretches, with that incomprehensible wisdom, which is intrinsical to thy Divine nature? The body of that sun is not for our weak eyes to behold; it is enough for me if I can but see some rays of that heavenly light, which shines forth so gloriously upon thy creature; in the framing and governing whereof, whether thy power or wisdom did and do more exhibit itself, thou only canst judge. Oh, the divine architecture of this goodly fabric of heaven and earth, raised out of nothing to this admirable perfection! What stupendous artifice of composition is here! what exquisite symmetry of parts! what exact order of degrees! what marvellous analogy betwixt beasts, fishes, plants, the natives of both elements! Oh, what a comprehensive reach is this of thine omniscience, which, at once, in one act, beholdest all the actions and events of all the creatures, that were, are, or shall be in this large universe! What a contrivance of thine eternal counsel, which has most wisely and holily ordered how to dispose of every creature thou hast made, according to the pleasure of thy most just will! What a sway of Providence is this, that governs the world, over-

ruling the highest, and stooping to the meanest piece of thy creation; concurring with and actuating the motions and operations of all second causes of whatsoever is done in heaven or in earth!

Yea, Lord, how wonderful are those irradiations of knowledge and wisdom, which thou hast beamed forth upon thine intelligent creatures, both angels and men! As for those celestial spirits, which see thy face continually, it is no marvel if they be illuminated in a degree far above human apprehension; but, that the rational soul of man, even in this woeful pilgrimage below, notwithstanding the opacity of that earth wherewith it is encompassed, should be so far enlightened, as that it is able to know all the motions of the heavens, the magnitudes and distances of stars, the natures, properties, influences of the planets, the instant of the eclipses, conjunctions, and several aspects of those celestial bodies; that it can discover the secret treasures of earth and sea; and knows how to unlock all the close cabinets both of art and nature: O God, what is this, but some little gleam of that pure and glorious light, which breaks forth from thine infiniteness upon thy creature? Yet, were the knowledge of all men on earth, and all the angels in heaven, multiplied a thousand fold, how unable were it, being united together, to reach unto the height of thy divine counsels; to fathom the bottom of thy most wise and holy decrees! so as they must be forced to cry out, with that saint of thine, who was rapt into the third heaven, 'Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearch-

able are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!'[1]

SECTION V.

But with what a trembling adoration, O my soul, must thou needs look upon the infinite justice of thy God; whose inviolable rule is to render to every man according to his works: Alas! the little good thou wert able to do hath been alloyed with so many and great imperfections, that it can expect no retribution but displeasure; and, for the many evils whereof thou art guilty, what canst thou look for but the wages of sin, death? not temporary and natural only, which is but a separation of thee awhile from thy load of earth; but the spiritual and eternal separation from the presence of thy God, whose very want is the height of torments. Lo, whatever become of thee, God must be himself. In vain shouldst thou hope, that for thyself he will abate aught of his blessed essence, of the sacred attributes: that righteous doom must stand, 'The soul that sins shall die.' Hell claims his due; justice must be satisfied: where art thou now, O my soul? what canst thou now make account of, but to despair and die? surely, in thyself, thou art lost; there is no way with thee but utter perdition.

But look up, O my soul, look up 'above the hills, whence cometh thy salvation:' see the heavens opening upon thee: see what reviving and comfortable rays of grace and mercy shine forth unto

[1] Rom. xi. 33.

thee, from that excellent glory; and out of that heavenly light, hear the voice of thy blessed Saviour, saying to thee, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.'[1] Even so, O Jesu, in thee, only in thee, is my help. Wretched man that I am, in myself I stand utterly forfeited to death and hell; it is thou that hast redeemed me, with no less ransom than thy precious blood. Death was owing by me; by thee it was paid for me, so as now my debt is fully discharged, and my soul clearly acquitted. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again.'[2] Lo, now, the rigour of thine inviolable justice is taken off by thine infinite mercy; the sum that I could never pay, is, by the power of that faith which thou hast wrought in me, set off to my all-sufficient surety, and, by thy divine goodness, graciously accepted as mine: I have paid it in him; he hath paid it for me. Thy justice is satisfied; thy debtor freed; and thy mercy magnified.

SECTION VI.

THERE are no bounds to be set unto thy thoughts, O my soul; since whatsoever thy God either is or hath done, comes within thy prospect. There, besides the great work of his creation, thou mayest dwell upon the no less almighty work of his administration of this universal world; whereof the preservation and government is no less wonderful

[1] Hos. xiii. 9. [2] Rom. viii. 33, 34.

than the frame; there thou shalt see the marvellous subordination of creatures, some made to rule, others to obey; the powerful influence of the celestial bodies upon the inferior; the continual transmutation of elements, forsaking their own places and natures to serve the whole; forms dying, matter perpetual; all things maintained by a friendly discord of humours, out of which they are raised; the circular revolution of fashions, occurrents, events; the different and opposite dispositions of men, overruled to such a temper, that yet government is continued in the hands of few, society and commerce with all; shortly, all creatures, while they do either naturally or voluntarily act their own part, doing unawares the will of their Creator.

But that which may justly challenge thy longer stay and greater wonder, is the more than transcendent work of man's redemption; 'the mysteries whereof the holy angels have desired to look into;'[1] but could never yet sufficiently conceive or admire. That the Son of God, the Lord of glory, co-eternal, co-equal to his Father, God blessed for ever, should take upon him an estate lower than their own; should clothe his Deity with the rags of our flesh; should stoop to weak and miserable manhood; and, in that low and despicable condition, should submit himself to hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation of devils, despite of men; to the cruelty of tormentors, to agonies of soul, to the pangs of a bitter, ignominious, cursed death; to the sense of his Father's wrath for us wretched sinners, that had made ourselves the worst of creatures, enemies to God,

[1] 1 Peter, i. 12.

slaves to Satan; is above the reach of all finite apprehension. O never-to-be-enough magnified mercy![1] Thou didst not, O Saviour, when thou sawest mankind utterly lost and forlorn, content thyself to send down one of thy cherubim or seraphim, or some other of thy heavenly angels, to undertake the great work of our deliverance, as well knowing that task too high for any created power; but wouldst, out of thine infinite love and compassion, vouchsafe so to abase thy blessed self, as to descend from the throne of thy celestial glory to this dungeon of earth; and, not leaving what thou hadst and what thou wast, to assume what thou hadst not—man; and to disparage thyself by being one of us, that we might become like unto thee, coheirs of thy glory and blessedness. Thou that art the eternal Son of God, wouldst condescend so low as to be man, that we, who are worms and no men, might be advanced to be the sons of God; thou wouldst be a servant, that we might reign; thou wouldst expose thyself to the shame and disgrace of thy vile creatures here, that thou mightest raise us up to the height of heavenly honour, with thee our God and thy holy angels; thou wouldst die for a while, that we might live eternally.

Pause here awhile, O my soul, and do not wish to change thy thoughts; neither earth nor heaven can yield thee any of higher concernment, of greater comfort; only, withal, behold the glorious person of that thy blessed Mediator, after his victories over death and hell, sitting triumphant in all the majesty of heaven, adored by all those millions of celestial spirits, in his glorified humanity; and,

[1] Bernard. Serm. de Passione Domini.

what thou mayest, enjoy the vision of him by faith, till thou shalt be everlastingly blessed with a clear and present intuition. Long after that day; and be ever careful, in the mean time, to make thyself ready for so infinite a happiness.

SECTION VII.

And now, O my soul, having left below thee all the trivial vanities of earth, and fixed thyself (so far as thy weak eyes will allow thee) upon thy God and Saviour, in his almighty works and most glorious attributes; it will be time for thee, and will not a little conduce to thy further address towards blessedness, to fasten thyself upon the sight of the happy estate of the saints above, who are gone before thee to their bliss; and have, through God's mercy, comfortably obtained that which thou aspirest unto. Thou that wert guided by their example, be likewise heartened by their success: thou art yet a traveller; they, comprehensors;[1] thou art panting towards that rest which they most happily enjoy; thou art sweating under the cross, while they sit crowned in a heavenly magnificence.

See the place wherein they are, the heaven of heavens, the paradise of God; infinitely resplendent, infinitely delectable; such as no eye can behold and not be blessed. Shouldst thou set thy tabernacle in the midst of the sun, thou couldst not

[1] Who have already obtained.—Ed.

but be encompassed with marvellous light; yet, even there, it would be but as midnight with thee, in comparison of those irradiations of glory, which shine forth above in that imperial region; for thy God is the sun there;[1] by how much, therefore, those divine rays of his exceed the brightest beams of his creature, so much doth the beauty of that heaven of the blessed, surpass the created light of this inferior and starry firmament. Even the very place contributes not a little to our joy or misery. It is hard to be merry in a gaol; and the great Persian monarch thought it very improper for a courtier to be of a sad countenance within the verge of so great a royalty.'[2] The very devils conceive horror at the apprehension of the place of their torment; and can beseech the over-ruling power of thy Saviour, 'not to command them to go out into the deep.'[3] No man can be so insensate, to think there can be more dreadfulness in the place of those infernal tortures, than there is pleasure and joy in the height of that sphere of blessedness; since we know we have to do with a God that delights more in the prosperity of his saints than in the cruciation and howling of his enemies. How canst thou then, O my soul, be but wholly taken up with the sight of that celestial Jerusalem, the beauteous city of thy God, the blessed mansions of glorified spirits! Surely, if earth could have yielded any thing more fair and estimable than gold, pearls, precious stones, it should have been borrowed to resemble these supernal habitations; but, alas, the lustre of these base materials doth but darken the

[1] Rev. xxi. 23. [2] Neh. ii. 2.
[3] Luke viii. 31

resplendence of those divine excellencies. With what contempt, now, dost thou look down upon those muddy foundations of earth, which the low spirits of worldlings are wont to admire! and how feelingly dost thou bless and emulate the spirits of just men made perfect, who are honoured with so blissful a habitation![1]

But what were the place, O my soul, how goodly and glorious soever in itself, if it were not for the presence of him whose being there makes it heaven? Lo there the throne of that heavenly Majesty, which, filling and comprehending the large circumference of this whole, both lower and superior world, yet there keeps and manifests his state, with the infinite magnificence of the King of Eternal Glory. There he, in an ineffectible[2] manner, communicates himself to blessed spirits, both angels and men; and that very vision is no less to them than beatifical. Surely, were the place a thousand degrees lower in beauty and perfection than it is, yet that presence would render it celestial: the residence of the king was wont to turn the meanest village or castle into a court. The sweet singer of Israel saw this of old, and could say, 'In thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' It is not so, in these earthly and finite excellencies. A man may see mountains of treasure and be never a whit the richer; and may be the witness and agent too in another's honour, as Haman was of Mordecai's, and be so much more miserable; or may view the pomp and splendour of mighty princes, and be yet still a beggar; but the infinite graces of that heavenly

[1] Heb. xii. 23. [2] Inconceivable, incomprehensible.

King are so communicative, that no man can see him, but must be transformed into the likeness of his glory.

SECTION VIII.

Even thy weak and imperfect vision of such heavenly objects, O my soul, is enough to lay a foundation of thy blessedness; and how can there choose but be raised thence, as a further degree towards it, a sweet complacency of heart, in an appropriation of what thou seest; without which nothing can make thee happy? Let the sun shine never so bright, what is this to thee, if thou be blind? Be the God of heaven never so glorious, yet if he be not thy God—be the Saviour of the world never so merciful, yet if he be not merciful to thee—be the heaven never so full of beauty and majesty, yet if thou have not thy portion in that inheritance of the saints in light—so far will it be from yielding thee comfort, that it will make a further addition to thy torment. What an aggravation of misery shall it be to those that were children of the kingdom, that from that utter darkness whereinto they are cast, they shall see aliens 'come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven!' Cease not then, O my soul, till, by a sure and undefeasible application, thou hast brought all these home to thyself; and canst look upon the great God of heaven, the gracious Redeemer of the world, the glory of that celestial

[1] Matt. viii. 11.

paradise, as thine own. Let it be thy bold ambition and holy curiosity to find thy name enrolled in that eternal register of heaven; and, if there be any one room in the many mansions of that celestial Jerusalem lower and less resplendent than other, thither do thou find thyself, through the great mercy of thy God, happily designed. It must be the work of thy faith that must do it; that divine grace it is, the power whereof can either fetch down heaven to thee, or carry thee beforehand up to thy heaven; and not affix thee only to thy God and Saviour, but unite thee to him, and (which is yet more) ascertain thee of so blessed an union.

Neither can it be but that from this sense of appropriation, there must necessarily follow a marvellous contentment and complacency, in the assurance of so happy an interest. Lord, how do I see poor worldlings please themselves in the conceit of their miserable proprieties! One thinks, 'Is not this my great Babylon, which I have built?'[1] Another, "Are not these my rich mines?" Another, "Is not this my royal and adored magnificence?" And how are those unstable minds transported with the opinion of these great, but indeed worthless peculiarities, which, after some little time, moulder with them into dust! How canst thou then be but pleasingly affected, O my soul, with the comfortable sense of having a God, a Saviour, and heaven of thine own! For in these spiritual and heavenly felicities, our right is not partial and divided, as it useth to be in secular inheritances; so as that every one hath his share distinguished from the rest, and parcelled out of the whole: but here, each one hath

[1] Dan. iv. 30.

all; and this blessed patrimony is communicated to all saints, as that the whole is the propriety of every one.

Upon the assurance, therefore, of thy God's gracious promises made to every true believer, find thou thyself happily seized of both the King and kingdom of heaven, so far as thy faith can as yet feoff[1] thee in both; and delight thyself, above all things, in these unfailing pledges of thine instant blessedness; and say, with the holy mother of thy Redeemer, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.'[2]

SECTION IX.

From this feeling complacency, in the owning of thy right to glory and happiness, there cannot but arise a longing desire of the full possession thereof; for thou canst not so little love thyself, as what thou knowest thou hast a just title unto, and withal apprehendest to be infinitely pleasing and beneficial, not to wish that thou mayest freely enjoy it. If thou have tasted how sweet the Lord is, thou canst not but long for more of him; yea, for all. It is no otherwise even in carnal delights; the degustation whereof is wont to draw on the heart to a more eager appetition: much more in spiritual; the pleasures whereof, as they are more pure, so they are of the heavenly-minded with far greater ardency of spirit affected. The covetous man's heart is in his bags; what he hath doth but aug-

[1] Invest with possession or right.—Ed. [2] Luke i. 46, 47.

ment his lust of more; and the having of more doth not satiate, but enlarge his desires. 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase;'[1] but these celestial riches are so much more allective[2] as they are more excellent than those which are delved out of the bowels of the earth. O my soul, thou hast, through the favour of thy God, sipped some little of the cup of immortality; and tasted of that heavenly manna, the food of angels; and canst thou take up with these slight touches of blessedness? Thou hast, though most unworthy, the honour to be contracted to thy Saviour here below; thou knowest the voice of his spouse, 'Draw me, and we shall run after thee. Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.'[3] Where is thy love, if thou have not fervent desires of a perpetual enjoyment? if thou do not earnestly wish for a full consummation of that heavenly match?

O my Lord and Saviour, as I am not worthy to love thee, so I were not able to love thee, how amiable soever, but by thee. O thou that hast begun to kindle this fire of heavenly love in me, raise thou it up to a perfect flame; make me not only sick of thy love, but ready and desirous to die for thee, that I may enjoy thee. Oh, let me not endure, that any worldly heart should be more enamoured of these earthly beauties, which are but varnished rottenness, than I am of thee, who art of absolute

[1] Eccl. v. 10. [2] Attractive.—Ed.
[3] Cant. i. 4; ii. 5; viii. 14.

and infinite perfections, and bestowest them in being loved. Oh, when shall the day be, wherein thou wilt make up these blessed nuptials, and endow me with a full participation of that glory, wherewith thou art invested, from and to all eternity? Whereto have all thy sweet favours and gracious love-tokens tended, but to this issue of blessedness? Oh, do thou crown all thy mercies in me, and me with immortality!

SECTION X.

Upon this desire of fruition, if thou wouldst be truly happy, there must follow a constant prosecution of that desire; for if thy wishes be never so fervent, yet if they be only volatile and transient, they shall be able to avail thee little: slight and flickering motions of good, if they be not followed with due endeavours, sort to no effect.

Content not thyself, therefore, O my soul, that thou hast entertained into thyself some affective[1] thoughts of thy beatitude, but settle thyself in firm resolutions to pursue and perpetuate them; let them not call in as strangers, but dwell in thee as inmates, never to be by any secular occasions dislodged. These morning dews of holy dispositions, which are ready to be exhaled with every gleam of worldly prosperity, as they find little acceptance from God, so they are able to afford small comfort to thee; as whose condition is such, that they leave thee more disconsolate in their

[1] Desiring.—L.D.

vanishing than they yielded thee pleasure in their momentary continuance. Be thou able to say with holy David, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;' and then thou mayest well add, 'I will sing and give praise;'[1] otherwise, thy distracted thoughts will admit no cause of sound joy. In this case it falls out with thee, O my soul, as with some fond child, who, eagerly following a bee in hope of her bag, sees a gay butterfly cross his way, and thereupon leaves his first chase and runs after those painted wings; but, in that pursuit, seeing a bird fly close by him, he leaves the fly in hope of a better purchase; but, in the mean time, is disappointed of all, and catcheth nothing. It mainly behoves thee, therefore, to keep up thy cogitations and affections close to these heavenly objects, and to check them whensoever thou perceivest an inclination to their wandering; like as the careful huntsman, when he finds his hound offering to follow after a new game, rates him off, and holds him to his first scent. Whither are ye straying, O my thoughts? What means this sinful and lossful inconstancy? Can ye be happier in a change? Is there any thing in this miserable world that can be worthy to carry you away from the hopes and affectations[2] of blessedness? Have ye not full often complained of the worthlessness and satiety of these poor vanities here below? Have ye not found their promises false, their performances unsatisfactory, their disappointment irksome? Away then, ye frivolous temptations, and solicit those minds that are low and empty like yourselves; for me, I disdain your

[1] Psalm, lvii. 7. [2] Desires.—Ed.

motions, and being taken up with higher employments, scorn to descend to your base suggestions, which tend to nothing but mere earthliness.

But as there is no fire which will not go out if it be not fed, it cannot be enough that thou hast entertained these gracious resolutions, unless thou do also supply and nourish them with holy meditations, devout prayers, continual ejaculations, and the due frequentation of all the holy ordinances of thy God; without which, if they shall languish through thy neglect, thou shalt find double more work and difficulty in reviving them, than there could have been in maintaining and upholding them in their former vigour. Be not, therefore, wanting to thyself in the perpetual exercise and improvement of all those holy means that may further and perfect these heavenly longings after salvation; thy God shall not be wanting to thee in blessing thee with an answerable success.

SECTION XI.

It is the just praise of the marvellous bounty of thy God, O my soul, that 'he will fulfil the desires of them that fear him.'[1] If, therefore, thou canst hunger and thirst after righteousness, if thy heart can yearn after heaven, he shall be sure to satisfy thee with goodness; and not only shall bring thee home at the last to that land of promised blessed-

[1] Psalm, cxlv. 19.

ness, but, in the mean time, also put thee into an incohate fruition of happiness, which is the next degree of thine ascent to heaven.

That which is complete may be the surest rule of knowing and judging of that which is imperfect. Wherein doth the perfection of heavenly bliss consist, but in a perpetual enjoying the presence of God, in a clear vision of the Divine Essence, in a perfect union with God, and an eternal participation of his life and glory? Now, as grace is glory begun, and glory is grace consummate, so dost thou, O my soul, being wrought to it by the power of the Spirit of thy God, even in this life, how weakly soever, enter upon all these acts and privileges of beatitude: even here below thou art never out of the presence of thy God, and that presence can never be other than glorious; and that it is not beatifical here, is not out of any deficiency in it, but in thine own miserable incapacity, who, while thou abidest in this vale of tears, and art clogged with this flesh, art no fit subject of so happy a condition. Yea, that blessed presence is ever comfortably acknowledged by thee, and enjoyed with such contentment and pleasure that thou wouldst not part with it for a world, and that thou justly accountest all earthly delights but mere vexations to that alone: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and what do I desire on earth in comparison of thee?'[1] Balaam could say, how truly soever, 'I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh;'[2] but, Lord, I see thee even now; I behold thee so nigh me that I live in thee, and would rather die than live without thee. I see thee, though

[1] Psalm, lxxiii. 25. [2] Num. xxiv. 17.

weakly and dimly, yet truly and really; I see thee as my God all-sufficient, as my powerful Creator, my merciful Redeemer, my gracious Comforter; I see thee, the living God, the Father of lights, the God of spirits, dwelling in light inaccessible, animating, filling, comprehending this glorious world; and do awfully adore thine infiniteness.

Neither do I look at thee with a trembling astonishment, as some dreadful stranger or terrible avenger; but I behold thy majesty so graciously complying with my wretchedness that thou admittest me to a blessed union with thee. I take thee at thy word, O dear Saviour, even that sweet word of impetration,[1] which thou wert pleased to utter to thy co-eternal Father, immediately before thy meritorious passion: 'I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.'[2] I know thou couldst not but be heard in all that thou prayest, and therefore I take what thou suedst for as done. Lord, I do believe in thee; unite thou me to thee; make me one spirit with thee.[3] It is no presumption to sue and hope for what thou hast prayed for and promised to perform. O, make me, according to the capability of my weak humanity, partaker of

[1] Prayer obtained.—Ed. [2] John, xvii 20—23.
[3] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

thy divine nature.[1] Vouchsafe to allow me, even me, poor wretched soul, to say of thee, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.'[2] And, by virtue of this indissoluble union, why shouldst thou not, O my soul, find thyself endowed with a blessed participation of that heavenly life and glory which is in and with him? In that thou art united to thy body, thou impartest to it vegetation, sense, motion, and givest it a share in the exercise of all thy noble faculties; how much more entire and beneficial is the spiritual union of thy God and thee! Alas, that bond of natural conjunction is easily dissolved by ten thousand ways of death; this heavenly knot is so fast tied that all the powers of hell cannot unloose it. And the blessings communicated to thee by this divine match are so much more excellent as the infinite giver of them is above thy meanness. Lo, now thou art actually interested in all that thy God is or hath; his kingdom is thine, his glory is thine, to all eternity.

SECTION XII.

And what now can follow, O my soul, upon the apprehension of thus enjoying the presence of thy God, and the vision of so blessed an object, and thine union with him and participation of him, but a sensible ravishment of spirit, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory? Heretofore, if some

[1] 2 Peter, i. 4. [2] Cant. vi. 3.

great friend should have brought me to the court, and, having showed me the splendour and magnificence of that seat of majesty, should have brought me into the sight of the king's royal person; and should have procured me, not only a familiar conference with him, but the entire affection of a favourite; and from thence there should have been heaped upon me titles of honour and large revenues, and yet higher, a consociation of princely dignity; how should I have been transported with the sense of so eminent an advancement! how great and happy should I have seemed, not more in others' eyes than in my own! what big thoughts had hereupon swollen up my heart in the days of my vanity! But, alas, what poor things are these, in comparison of those heavenly promotions! I might have been brought into the stateliest court of this world, and have been honoured, not only with the presence, but the highest favours of the best and greatest of kings, and yet have been most miserable. Yea, which of those monarchs that have the command and dispensation of all greatness, can secure himself from the saddest infelicities? But these spiritual prerogatives are above the reach of all possible miseries, and can and do put thee in some degree into an unfailing possession, both real and personal, of eternal blessedness. I cannot wonder that Peter, when, with the other two disciples upon mount Tabor, he saw the glorious transfiguration of my Saviour, was out of himself for the time, and knew not what he said; yet, as not thinking himself and his partners any other ways concerned than in the sight of so heavenly a vision, he mentions only three tabernacles for

Christ, Moses, Elias, none for themselves.[1] It was enough for him, if without doors, he might be still blessed with such a prospect; but how had he been rapt from himself, if he had found himself taken into the society of this wondrous transformation, and interested in the communion of this glory!

Thy renovation and the power of thy faith, O my soul, puts thee into that happy condition: thou art spiritually transfigured into the similitude of thy blessed Saviour, shining with his righteousness and holiness;[2] so as he is glorified in thee, and thou in him;[3] glorified, not in the fulness of that perfection which will be, but in the pledge and earnest of what shall and must be hereafter.

Oh, then, with what unspeakable joy and jubilation dost thou entertain thy happiness! How canst thou contain thyself any longer within these bounds of my flesh, when thou feelest thyself thus initiated into glory? Art thou in heaven, and knowest it not? Knowest thou not, that he who is within the entry or behind the screen, is as truly within the house as he that walks in the hall or sits in the parlour? And canst thou pretend to be within the verge of heaven and not rejoice? What is it that makes heaven, but joy and felicity? Thy very thought cannot separate these two, no more than it can sever the sun and light; for both these are equally the originals and fountains of light and joy; from whence they both flow, and in which both are complete. There is no light which is not derived from the sun, no true joy but from heaven; as, therefore, the nearer to the body of the sun, the more light and heat, so the nearer to

[1] Mark, ix. 6; Luke, ix. 33. [2] Rom. xii. 2; Eph. iv. 24.
[3] John, xvii. 10; 2 Thes. i. 12.

heaven, the more excess of joy. And certainly, O my soul, there is nothing but infidelity can keep thee from an exuberance of joy and delight in the apprehension of heaven.

Can the weary traveller, after he hath measured many tedious miles, and passed many dangers both by sea and land, and felt the harsh entertainments of a stranger, choose but rejoice to draw near in his return to a rich and pleasant home? Can the ward, after a hard pupilage, choose but rejoice that the day is coming wherein he shall freely enjoy all his lordly revenues and royalties? Can a Joseph choose but find himself inwardly joyed, when out of the dungeon he shall be called up, not to liberty only, but to honour; and shall be arrayed with a vesture of fine linen, and graced with Pharaoh's ring and chain, and set in his second chariot, and in the next chair to the throne of Egypt? And canst thou apprehend thyself now approaching to the glory of the heaven of heavens, a place and state of so infinite contentment and happiness, and not to be ecstasied with joy? There, there shalt thou, O my soul, enjoy a perfect rest from all thy toils, cares, fears; there shalt thou find a true vital life, free from all the incumbrances of thy miserable pilgrimage; free from the dangers of either sins or temptations; free from all anxiety and distraction; free from all sorrow, pain, perturbation; free from all the possibility of change or death: a life, wherein there is nothing but pure and perfect pleasure; nothing but perpetual melody of angels and saints, singing sweet hallelujahs to their God; a life which the most glorious Deity both gives and is; a life wherein thou hast the full fruition of the ever-blessed Godhead, the continual

society of the celestial spirits, the blissful presence of the glorified humanity of thy dear Saviour: a life wherein thou hast ever consort with the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the patriarchs and prophets, the noble army of martyrs and confessors, the celestial synod of all the holy fathers and illuminated doctors of the church; shortly, the blessed assembly of all the faithful professors of the name of the Lord Jesus, that, having finished their course, sit now shining in their promised glory. See there that yet unapproachable light that divine magnificence of the heavenly King; see that resplendent crown of righteousness which decks the heads of every of those saints, and is ready to be set on thine, when thou hast happily overcome those spiritual powers wherewith thou art still conflicting; see the joyful triumphs of these exulting victors; see the measures of their glory different, yet all full, and the least unmeasureable; lastly, see all this happiness not limited to thousands, nor yet millions of years, but commeasured by no less than eternity.

And now, my soul, if thou have received the infallible engagement of thy God, in that, having believed thou art sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of thine inheritance until the full redemption of thy purchased possession;[1] if, through his infinite mercy, thou be now upon the entering into that blessed place and state of immortality; forbear, if thou canst, to be raised above thyself with the 'joy of the Holy Ghost,'[2] to be enlarged towards thy God with a joy unspeakable and glorious. See, if thou canst now breathe

[1] Eph. i. 13, 14. [2] 1 Thes. i. 6.

forth any thing but praises to thy God, and songs of rejoicing: bearing evermore a part in that heavenly ditty of the angels, 'Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God, for ever and ever.'[1]

SECTION XIII.

And now what remains, O my soul, but that thou do humbly and faithfully wait at the gate of heaven for a happy entrance, at the good pleasure of thy God, into those everlasting mansions? I confess, should thy merits be weighed in the balance of a rigorous justice, another place, which I cannot mention without horror, were more fit for thee, more due to thee; for, alas, thou hast been above measure sinful, and thou knowest the wages of sin—death. But 'the God of my mercy hath prevented' thee with infinite compassion;[2] and, in the multitude of his tender mercies, hath not only 'delivered' thee 'from the nethermost hell,'[3] but hath also vouchsafed to 'translate' thee 'to the kingdom of his dear Son.'[4] In him thou hast boldness of access to the throne of grace; thou, who in thyself art worthy to be a child of wrath, art in him adopted to be a co-heir of glory, and hast the livery and sezin[5] given thee beforehand of a blessed possession, the full estating wherein I do in all humble awfulness attend.

All the few days therefore of my appointed time

[1] Rev. vii. 12.
[2] Psalm, lix. 10.
[3] Psalm, lxxxvi. 13.
[4] Col. i. 13.
[5] Delivery and possession.—Ed.

will I wait at the threshold of grace, until my changing come, with a trembling joy, with a longing patience, with a comfortable hope. Only, Lord, I know there is something to be done ere I can enter: I must die ere I can be capable to enjoy that blessed life with thee; one stroke of thine angel must be endured in my passage into thy paradise. And, lo, here I am before thee, ready to embrace the condition; even when thou pleasest let me bleed once to be ever happy. Thou hast, after a weary walk through this roaring wilderness, vouchsafed to call up thy servant to mount Nebo; and from thence aloof off to show me the land of promise, a land that flows with milk and honey. Do thou but say, "Die thou on this hill," with this prospect in mine eye; and do thou mercifully take my soul from me, who gavest it to me, and dispose of it where thou wilt in that region of immortality. Amen, amen. Come Lord Jesu, come quickly.

Behold, Lord, I have by thy providence dwelt in this house of clay more than double the time wherein thou wert pleased to sojourn upon earth, yet I may well say, with thy holy patriarch, 'Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage;'[1] few in number, evil in condition. Few in themselves, but none at all to thee, with whom 'a thousand years are but as one day.' But had they been double to the age of Methuselah, could they have been so much as one minute to eternity? Yea, what were they to me, now that they are past, but as a tale that is told and forgotten?

[1] Gen. xlvii. 9.

Neither yet have they been so few as evil. Lord, what troubles and sorrows hast thou let me see, both my own and others! what vicissitudes of sickness and health! what ebbs and flows of condition! how many successions and changes of princes, both at home and abroad! what turnings of times! what alteration of governments! what shiftings and downfalls of favourites! what ruins and desolations of kingdoms! what sacking of cities! what havocs of war! what frenzies of rebellions! what underminings of treachery! what cruelties and barbarisms in revenges! what anguish in the oppressed and tormented! what agonies in temptations! what pangs in dying! These I have seen, and in these I have suffered. And now, Lord, how willing I am to change time for eternity, the evils of earth for the joys of heaven, misery for happiness, a dying life for immortality!

Even so, Lord Jesu; take what thou hast bought, receive my soul to thy mercy, and crown it with thy glory. Amen, amen, amen.

THE END.

J. Rickerby, Printer, Sherbourn Lane.

Vol. VI. (to be published on the 1st of June) will contain

BAXTER'S DYING THOUGHTS;

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY THE REV. HENRY STEBBING, M. A.

SACRED CLASSICS.

The following Works have already appeared, and may be had separately, Price 3s. 6d.

I.

THE LIBERTY OF PROPHESYING;

Shewing the Unreasonableness of Prescribing to other Men's Faith; and the Iniquity of Persecuting Differing Opinions.

BY JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D.

WITH

An Introductory Essay,

BY THE REV. RICHARD CATTERMOLE, B.D.

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